

The Gospel According to ST. LUKE

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. The earliest manuscripts having the title of this gospel read, “According to Luke.” Later manuscripts read, “The Gospel According to Luke,” or, “The Holy Gospel According to Luke.”

2. Authorship. The ancient and unanimous consensus of Christian tradition points to Luke as the author of the Gospel that bears his name. In his *Ecclesiastical History* (iii. 4.6) Eusebius (died c. 340) specifically designates Luke as the author of this Gospel. A century earlier Tertullian (died c. 230) spoke of Paul as the “illuminator” of Luke, that is, the one who encouraged Luke and provided him with much of the information contained in Luke’s writings. About the year A.D. 185 Irenaeus wrote: “Luke, the follower of Paul, put in a book the gospel that was preached by him.” The famous Muratorian Fragment, a portion of a document written toward the close of the 2d century, agrees with Irenaeus, stating that the third Gospel was written by Luke the physician, a companion of Paul. Early tradition thus unanimously favors Luke as the author of the Gospel that bears his name. There is no evidence that points to anyone other than Luke as the author.

Luke and the Acts may be considered as volumes 1 and 2 of a work that might appropriately be entitled “The Origin and Early Development of Christianity.” The introduction to the book of Acts (ch. 1:1) clearly points to the common authorship of the two books. Literary style and diction are manifestly the same in both. Both are dedicated to the same man, Theophilus (see on Luke 1:3). The sections in the book of Acts where the author uses the personal pronoun “we” indicate that he was a close companion of Paul, particularly during his closing years of ministry. From Troas, it appears that the author was associated with Paul during the pioneer days of the gospel in Greece (Acts 16:10–18), was with him on his final visit to Palestine (chs. 20:5 to 21:18), and accompanied him on his voyage to Rome (chs. 27:1 to 28:16). In Col. 4:14 and 24>Philemon 23, 24, Luke, as a collaborer with Paul, sends greetings to those to whom these epistles are addressed. Toward the close of his final imprisonment in Rome, Paul wrote Timothy, “Only Luke is with me” (2 Tim. 4:11). The apostle’s other companions had either been dispatched on missions to one or another of the churches or had forsaken him. Amid the gathering shadows of his last days, Paul must have felt a profound appreciation for the tender and competent ministry of a man such as the “beloved physician.” This man, it seems clear, was the author of Acts and of the Gospel that bears his name.

The context of 14>Col. 4:11–14 seems to imply Luke was not a Jew but a Gentile, for he is listed, not among men of the circumcision, but with others who are known to have been Gentiles. The book of Luke is generally considered to be one of the most literary of the NT, and in many respects most nearly like the style of the great Greek writers. This is particularly true of the introduction to Luke (vs. 4>1–4).

Eusebius (*ibid.*) describes Luke as “by race an Antiochian and a physician by profession.” He was, presumably, a native of Antioch, and some have thought that it was there that he wrote. Others have suggested Rome as the place of writing. Luke and Paul are the two most voluminous contributors to the NT. The place and manner of Luke’s death are unknown, though tradition states that Luke was martyred in Greece, explaining that he was nailed to a living olive tree.

Conservative scholars generally date the book of Luke not later than the year A.D. 63, for the following reasons: The book of Luke was apparently written before the book of Acts (see Acts 1:1). The abrupt ending of the book of Acts is generally considered to be evidence that this book was written during the time of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, about A.D. 61–63, probably soon after his arrival in that city. The simplest explanation for the abrupt ending is that Luke told no more in the book of Acts because, at the time, there was no more to tell. It is extremely unlikely that the trial, release, rearrest, conviction, and execution of Paul would have been omitted from the record of Acts had these events already taken place at the time of the composition of the book. There is no evidence that these events were part of the original text of Acts or that they were lost from it at some later time. In view of these facts it is safe to assume that the Acts was written about A.D. 63 and the Gospel of Luke even earlier (see Acts 1:1)—how much earlier cannot be said. For a further discussion of the chronology of the writing of the Gospels see pp. 178, 179. For various theories on the origin of the Gospels see pp. 175–177.

3. Historical Setting. For a brief outline of the historical background of the life and mission of Jesus see p. 272. For a more complete discussion see pp. 41–67.

4. Theme. Matthew presents Jesus as the great Teacher, the exponent of divine truth. Mark presents Him as the Man of action, and gives emphasis to His miracles as a manifestation of divine power attesting His Messiahship. Luke brings Jesus into close contact with human needs, emphasizing the human side of His nature, and presents Him as the Friend of humanity. John presents Jesus as the divine Son of God.

As Matthew is believed to have written primarily for readers of Jewish birth, and Mark for those of a Latin background, so Luke is thought to have written especially for Greek readers. His diction suggests that he addressed himself to the cultured and educated men of his day. He was evidently a man of intelligence and culture, acquainted with contemporary literary style. This is evident from his prefaces to Luke and Acts, his dating of events in terms of the tenure of various officials, and his use of, and references to, the sources of information on which he relied.

As Matthew, writing primarily for men of Jewish ancestry, traces the genealogy of Jesus back to the founder of their nation, so Luke, writing for men of all races, traces the ancestry of Jesus back to Adam, the father of all mankind. More than any other evangelist, Luke takes note of incidents that reveal Jesus' interest in, and ministry for, Gentiles. More than any other gospel writer he refers to Roman centurions, and always in a favorable light. The world view of Luke is also evident in his record of Paul's appeals to the Gentiles (see Acts 14:15–17; 17:22–31). In Luke there is scarcely a trace of Jewish exclusiveness, which may be detected occasionally in Matthew and Mark.

Further evidence that Luke was the writer of the Gospel that bears his name is to be found in the medical terms appearing frequently in the book (Luke 4:38; 5:12; 8:43; etc.). These are thought to indicate that the author was a physician (see Col. 4:14).

5. Outline. In view of the fact that a full, chronological outline of the Gospel of Luke appears on pp. 196–201, the outline presented here covers only the major phases of the life and ministry of Jesus.

- I. Infancy, Childhood, and Youth, 1:1 to 2:52.
- II. Preparation for Ministry, Autumn, A.D. 27, 3:1 to 4:13.
- III. Galilean Ministry, Passover to Passover, A.D. 29–30, 4:14 to 9:17.
- A. Early Galilean ministry, 4:14–41.

- B. First missionary journey through Galilee, 4:12 to 5:16.
- C. Ministry in and about Capernaum, 5:17 to 6:16.
- D. The Sermon on the Mount, 6:17–49.
- E. Second missionary journey through Galilee, 7:1 to 8:56.
- F. Third missionary journey through Galilee, 9:1–17.
- IV. Retirement From Public Ministry, Spring to Autumn, A.D. 30, 9:18–50.
- V. Peraean Ministry, Autumn to Spring, A.D. 30–31, 9:51 to 19:27.
- A. Ministry in Samaria and in Peraea, 9:51 to 10:24.
- B. Teaching in parables, 10:25 to 18:14.
- C. The last journey to Jerusalem, 18:15 to 19:27.
- VI. Closing Ministry at Jerusalem, Passover, A.D. 31, 19:28 to 23:56.
- A. Conflict with scribes and Pharisees, 19:28 to 21:4.
- B. The Olivet discourse, 21:5–38.
- C. The arrest and trial of Jesus, 22:1 to 23:25.
- D. The crucifixion and burial of Jesus, 23:26–56.
- VII. The Resurrection; Postresurrection Appearances, 24:1–53.

CHAPTER 1

1 *The preface of Luke to his whole gospel.* 5 *The conception of John the Baptist,* 26 *and of Christ.* 39 *The prophecy of Elisabeth, and of Mary, concerning Christ.* 57 *The nativity and circumcision of John.* 67 *The prophecy of Zacharias, both of Christ,* 76 *and of John.*

1. Forasmuch. [*Prologue to Luke's Gospel*, Luke 1:1–4] Verses 1–4, which constitute Luke's preface to his Gospel, are in splendid literary Koine, that is, the "common [language]" of the Greek-speaking Roman world. This introduction conforms to the best Greek literary models. It is polished, yet gracious and modest. For a transition in style, see on v. 5.

The similarity of this introduction to that of the book of Acts (Acts 1:1, 2), together with the fact that the book of Acts takes up the narrative at the very point where the Gospel of Luke lays it down (see ch. 24:50–53), suggests that Luke intended the two books to form a two-volume history of the early Christian church.

Many. There is no way of telling whether Luke includes Matthew and Mark in his reference to "many," though for various reasons it is thought that at least Mark, and possibly Matthew, had already been written (see pp. 178, 179). "Many," however, would seem to imply more than two, and it is therefore likely that the term here includes some written histories other than *the Gospels*. Luke cannot have had in mind the apocryphal gospels that are in existence today, for they were not written until many years later. It appears that at least some of the previous writers had been "eyewitnesses" of the things they recorded, and may therefore have belonged to the Twelve or the Seventy (see on v. 2).

Taken in hand. Gr. *epicheireō*, literally, "to put the hand to"; hence, "to undertake," or "to attempt." Some commentators understand Luke's statement to imply that the writers he is referring to proceeded on their own, without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. But it is clear from the use of *epicheireō* in the papyri that such a conclusion is unwarranted and that Luke casts no reflection on any previous authors. They had meant well, and their accounts were not to be rejected as historical source material, though the men were not necessarily divinely inspired, as was Luke. Luke considers these writers in

a favorable light, and in fact, classifies himself with them by the expression “me also” (v. 3).

To set forth in order. Gr. *anatassomai*, “to compile,” “to arrange,” “to compose.” The idea of chronological order or arrangement is not necessarily implied. Compare the Gr. *pathexēs* (see on v. 3). These terms may suggest that accounts written by previous gospel writers had been incomplete, but in no way imply that they were inaccurate.

Declaration. Gr. *diēgēsis*, a “narrative.” It is composed of two Greek words meaning, literally, “to lead the way through.”

Which are most surely believed. Rather, “which have been accomplished.”

2. They. That is, the “eyewitnesses, and ministers.” The word “they” may also possibly refer to the “many” of v. 1.

Delivered. Gr. *paradidōmi* “to hand over,” “to deliver,” or “to commit.” Here it refers simply to the handing down of information from one generation or group of people to another (see 1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3; 2 Tim. 2:2). Those who “received” truth were to “deliver” it to others. Paul and Luke were, so to speak, second-generation Christians and had “received” what they passed on to others.

Which. Rather, “who.” In the Greek the clause beginning here does not modify “us,” as it apparently does in the English, but rather the subject “they.” In other words, those who “delivered” the narratives were the “eyewitnesses,” and not those who received them.

From the beginning. That is, from the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, though some of the “eyewitnesses” may also have been able to report circumstances connected with the infancy of John the Baptist and of Jesus.

Eyewitnesses. Gr. *autoptai*, “those who see with their own eyes.” John referred to himself as an eyewitness (John 1:14; 21:24; 1 John 1:1, 2). All of the Twelve, the seventy disciples, and the women who accompanied Jesus and His disciples and ministered to them were eyewitnesses, more or less “from the beginning.” In contrast, Luke, Paul, and Timothy might be called “ear-witnesses,” for their knowledge of the life and ministry of Jesus was derived from others. This apparent handicap, however, in no way diminishes the value of their testimony, for they received their information both through instruction from “eye-witnesses” and by divine revelation (1 Cor. 15:3–7; Gal. 1:11, 12).

The modesty here exhibited by Luke is excellent testimony in favor of the reliability and validity of the Gospel that bears his name. He was careful to state the exact truth, and laid no claim to being an “eyewitness,” as a forger might be expected to do. In fact, Luke himself here clearly states that his own understanding of the facts concerning the life and ministry of Christ came originally through the channel of eyewitness accounts. Thus it appears that the role of Inspiration in Luke’s case was not so much to *impart* original information as to *guarantee* the accuracy of what he recorded of the testimony of others. Luke was a historian who went to the original sources, but he was much more than that; he was an inspired historian.

It is clear from Luke’s experience that Inspiration functions in a manner consistent with the natural operation of the mental faculties and does not set them aside. Here is an inspired writer who was led by the Holy Spirit to give diligent study to the available oral and written source materials on the life of Christ, and then to combine into a connected

narrative the information thus gathered. For further consideration of the manner in which Inspiration guides the human instrument in the use of extant historical documents, see F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pp. 413–422.

3. It seemed good to me. It seemed appropriate to Luke to compose a complete, accurate, and authentic account of Christ's life, perhaps with the thought in mind of recording some events that might have been omitted in previous accounts written by "many" (see on v. 1). These words reveal the way in which at least some of the Bible writers were led of God to prepare the inspired record. The impression conveyed to Luke's mind by the Holy Spirit had the effect of making a certain course of action seem appropriate and desirable to him. In his account of the Jerusalem council at which consideration was given to the admission of Gentiles into the Christian church Luke quotes the apostles as writing to the believers at Antioch that the proposed course of action "seemed good" to them (see Acts 15:25). The brethren had counseled together, but their deliberations were guided by the Holy Spirit, and they explain confidently that "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, *and* to us" (v. 28). So it was with Luke; the Holy Spirit impelled him to write. But when he wrote, he wrote of his own free will, guided by God. For the manner in which the Holy Spirit guided the various Bible writers see EGW Supplementary Material, on 2 Peter 1:21.

Having had perfect understanding. Literally, "having followed after accurately." Luke's second reason for writing is the desire to pass on to others the benefits of his own thorough study of the life and teachings of Jesus. Apparently, Luke had begun at the beginning and had investigated everything. He offers his gospel narrative as being an accurate, thorough, and systematic presentation of the story of Jesus. These are characteristics of true scholarship. Whereas Matthew emphasizes the teachings of Jesus, and Mark, the incidents from His life ministry, Luke combines both elements in a more complete and systematic way than either of the others. Luke's claim concerning his "understanding of all things" is no idle boast; 43 of some 179 sections of the synoptic narrative appear only in his Gospel. See pp. 191, 192.

The very first. That is, of the life of Jesus. Like an explorer, Luke traced the stream of events to their very beginning and followed the stream closely throughout its course. Accordingly, Luke sets forth the circumstances surrounding the birth and childhood of Jesus in far greater detail than do the other evangelists. Only Luke records five of the six events mentioned in the Gospels prior to the birth of Jesus (see p. 196).

In order. Gr. *kathexeō*, "one after another," or "consecutively" (see on v. 1). Matthew consists largely of the discourses of Jesus arranged topically, whereas Mark deals with the events of Jesus' life, grouping them together according to kind. The general arrangement of both Matthew and Mark is chronological, but chronological sequence was not their primary objective. They rearranged the order of the various incidents in harmony with the guiding purpose of their book. Luke, on the other hand, follows a rather strict chronological order. Matthew and Mark did not attempt such a presentation. See pp. 191, 192.

Most excellent. A title frequently used in addressing high government officials, comparable to the modern "your excellency." The same term is used in referring to the Roman procurators of Judea (Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25). It is noteworthy to find a man of apparently high official rank accepting Christianity at this early period.

Theophilus. Literally, “friend of God.” There is little evidence to support the popular explanation that the name Theophilus did not represent any one person but was rather a general name used by Luke for Christians in general. However, the title “most excellent” seems definitely to imply that a real person is intended. Theophilus was probably a Gentile convert, as his Greek name implies.

4. Mightest know. Gr. *epiginōskō*, “to know fully.” That is, Theophilus was to have knowledge in addition to what he already knew of “those things” wherein he had “been instructed.”

Certainty. Gr. *asphaleia*, that which will not fall, from the two words *sphallō*, “to totter,” “to fall,” and the prefix *a*, “not.” There is “certainty” to the facts of the Christian faith, and he who believes in them will be steadfast and secure against error.

Been instructed. Gr. *katēcheō*, “to instruct,” or “to teach orally”; literally, “to sound down upon.” *Katēcheō* is the source of our word “catechize.” It is rendered “informed” in Acts 21:21, 24, “instructed” in Acts 18:25, and “taught” in Gal. 6:6. This word may imply that Theophilus had thus far received only oral instruction, such as might appropriately precede baptism. It is possible that he was one of Luke’s converts, one whom Luke had “catechized.” Or it may be that Luke wrote these things out to meet false reports against Christianity.

5. In the days. [*The Announcement to Zacharias, Luke 1:5–25.* See *The Nativity; a Suggestive Chronology of Christ’s Birth.*] Dating by regnal years is very common in Greek literature. Examples for each year of the 1st Christian century still survive. Taking up the thread of his narrative, Luke leaves the literary Koine style of vs. 1–4, with its elegant idiom, and turns to a style Hebraistic in form and reminiscent of such OT narratives as those of the birth of Samuel. In fact chs. 1:5 to 2:52 are perhaps the most Hebraistic of all Luke’s writings. They nevertheless bear the characteristic marks of Luke as an author. The fact that the series of narratives here recorded was of so personal a nature that Mary “kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart” (ch. 2:19), along with the fact that the other gospel writers have little to say about these events, suggests the possibility that the information here recorded may not have been generally known among Christian believers in the early years of the apostolic church.

Inasmuch as Luke refers to many oral and written sources of information (see on vs. 1–3), some suggest that he may have learned of the events of the infancy of Jesus from Mary herself. It appears that the narrative is presented from the viewpoint of Mary, as Matthew presents Jesus’ birth narrative from the viewpoint of Joseph (Matt. 1).

The nativity section (chs. 1:5 to 2:52) consists of seven parts: (1) The announcement of the birth of John the Baptist (ch. 1:5–25), (2) the announcement of the birth of Jesus (vs. 26–38), (3) the visit of Mary to Elisabeth (vs. 39–56), (4) the birth of John the Baptist (vs. 57–80), (5) the birth of Jesus (ch. 2:1–20), (6) the circumcision and presentation of Jesus (vs. 20–38), (7) the boyhood of Jesus (vs. 39–52).

Herod. See pp. 39–42; *The Hasmonaeans and the Herods, and Palestine Under the Herodians*. The days of Herod were days of cruelty and oppression for the Jewish people, even though the king was a professed convert to the Jewish religion. His dissolute character stands forth in striking contrast with the character of Zacharias, and was more or less typical of the age in which he lived.

Judea. Writing, as he evidently did, primarily for non-Palestinian readers, it seems that Luke often uses the name Judea as a general term for the whole of Palestine (Luke 6:17; 7:17; Acts 10:37).

Zacharias. From the Heb. *Zekaryah*, “Jehovah remembers,” or “Jehovah has remembered.” This name was borne by the son of Jehoiada (2 Chron. 24:20), by the prophet Zechariah, and by many others.

The course of Abia. David divided the priesthood into 24 courses (1 Chron. 24:1–18; 2 Chron. 8:14), of which the course of Abijah (or Abia) was the eighth (1 Chron. 24:10). Sixteen of the courses were made up of descendants of Eleazar, and eight, of descendants of Ithamar, both sons of Aaron. Only four of the courses were represented by the priests who returned from Babylon after the Captivity, and Abijah was not among these (see on Ezra 2:36). But those who did return were nevertheless divided into 21 or 22 courses (expanded to 24 in NT times), and were assigned the names of the original courses (see on Neh. 12:1). According to Josephus, each course of priests was expected to serve for a week, from Sabbath to Sabbath (*Antiquities* vii. 14. 7 [365, 366]), semiannually. At the Feast of Tabernacles all 24 courses were expected to be present. Attempts to determine the time of year at which the course of Abijah came up for service, based on the course serving at the time the Romans destroyed the Temple in A.D. 70, are apparently of little or no value as far as the dating of Luke’s narrative is concerned.

Elisabeth. From the Heb. *‘Elisheba’*, meaning “my God has sworn,” or “my God is abundance,” the name of the wife of Aaron (Ex. 6:23).

6. Righteous. Apparently Zacharias and Elisabeth belonged to that small group who eagerly studied the prophecies and looked for the coming of the Messiah (DA 44, 47, 98). Among the Jews the term “righteous” had come to have a technical meaning, and referred to those who strictly observed the ritual law and rabbinical traditions. It is obvious, however, that with Zacharias and Elisabeth righteousness was much more than an external conformity to the law. They were not mere legalists, but conscientious and exemplary in their fixed purpose to worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Other members of this small, select circle that awaited the coming of the Messiah were Joseph and Mary (see on Matt. 1:16-19), and Simeon and Anna (see on Luke 2:25, 26, 38).

Before God. Prior to his conversion Paul felt that he had “the righteousness which is in the law,” and was “blameless” (Phil. 3:6; see Acts 23:1). But conversion brought to him the realization that such “righteousness” was without avail (see Rom. 2:24, 25; 1 Tim. 1:15). In the case of Zacharias and Elisabeth, however, their “righteousness” exceeded that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5:20), who did their good deeds to be “seen of men” (Matt. 6:1, 5). Zacharias and Elisabeth were righteous “before God.” They were noble successors to heroes of faith such as Noah (Gen. 6:9; 7:1; Heb. 11:7), Abraham (Heb. 11:8), Job (Job 1:8; 2:3), and Daniel (Dan. 5:11, 12; 10:11), of whose righteousness Heaven approved (see Eze. 14:14).

Commandments and ordinances. In the days of Zacharias and Elisabeth this meant living in harmony with both the moral law and the law of Moses.

Since all men “have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23; see also 1 John 3:4), all stand in need of someone to “deliver” them from death, the penalty of disobedience (Rom. 6:23; 7:24). The Deliverer is none other than Christ Jesus (chs. 7:25 to 8:4). But until the Saviour came into the world, God ordained a system of sacrifices

(Heb. 9:1), which He “imposed on them until the time of reformation,” that is, until Christ should enter upon His priestly ministry (vs. 10, 11). In other words, Zacharias and Elisabeth purposed to obey God, sought salvation through the means provided, and as a result were accounted “righteous before God.”

7. No child. Among Oriental peoples childlessness has ever been looked upon as a great affliction. Often the Jews considered it to be divine punishment for sin (see on Lev. 20:20). Among the Jews, as among some Oriental peoples today, childlessness was considered adequate grounds for polygamy and concubinage, and was accepted as sufficient legal grounds for divorce.

How often have men who were chosen before birth to accomplish a great task for God been born in spite of age or sterility on the part of their parents (see Gen. 11:30; 17:17; 18:11; 25:21; 30:22–24; 1 Sam. 1:2, 8, 11). With men many things are impossible, but “with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37). God often leads men to realize their own weakness, in order that when deliverance comes they may appreciate His might and power through personal experience. In the case of Elisabeth there was a double reason for not expecting children, for to lifelong barrenness was added old age.

Well stricken in years. Literally, “advanced in their days,” from a characteristic Hebrew idiom (see Gen. 24:1; Joshua 13:1), which simply means “advanced in age.”

8. It came to pass. Gr. *egeneto*, from *ginomai*, “to become,” or “to be.” The expression, when appearing at the beginning of a narrative section, as here, is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew formula *wayehi*, “it came to pass,” so common in the OT. The expression is consistently omitted in some modern translations inasmuch as the sense is clear and complete without it.

His course. See on v. 5.

9. His lot was. Gr. *lagchanō*, “to obtain by lot.” Owing to the large number of priests, not all might officiate at any given service. Therefore lots were cast to determine who should participate each morning and each evening. According to Jewish tradition, the priests stood in a semicircle and each held up one or more fingers to be counted. Naming some number, such as 70, the “president” began counting and continued till the number selected indicated who was chosen. The first lot determined who should cleanse the altar of burnt offering and prepare the sacrifice, and the second, who was to offer the sacrifice and cleanse the candlestick and the altar of incense. The third lot, which determined who was to offer incense, was most important. The fourth lot determined who was to burn the pieces of the sacrifice on the altar and perform the concluding part of the service. Lots cast in the morning applied also to the evening service, except that the lot was cast anew for the burning of the incense.

To burn incense. The offering of incense was considered the most sacred and important part of the daily morning and evening services. These hours of worship, at each of which a lamb was offered (Ex. 29:38–42) for a burnt offering, were known as the morning and evening “burnt offering,” or “sacrifice” (2 Chron. 31:3; Ezra 9:4, 5), or as “the time of incense” (Luke 1:10; see Ex. 30:7, 8). These were hours of prayer for all Israelites, whether in attendance at the service, at home, or in foreign lands. As the incense ascended from the golden altar the prayers of Israel ascended with it to God (Rev. 8:3, 4; see on Ps. 141:2) for themselves and for their nation, in daily consecration (PP

352, 353). At this service the officiating priest prayed for the pardon of Israel's sins and for the coming of the Messiah (DA 99).

The privilege of officiating at the golden altar on behalf of Israel was considered a high honor, and Zacharias was in every respect worthy of it. This privilege usually came to each priest but once in a lifetime, and was therefore the great moment of his life. As a rule no priest might officiate at the altar more than once, and it is possible that some of the priests never had this opportunity.

The priest chosen by lot to offer the incense—in this case Zacharias—selected two of his fellow priests to assist him, one to remove the old coals from the altar and the other to lay upon it new coals taken from the altar of burnt offering. These two priests retired from the holy place after their assignments were completed, and the priest chosen by lot then arranged the incense upon the coals, and as he did so made intercession for Israel. As the cloud of incense arose, it filled the holy place and even passed above the veil into the most holy place. The altar of incense was immediately before the veil, and although actually within the holy place, it seems to have been considered as belonging to the most holy (see on Heb. 9:4). The golden altar was “an altar of perpetual intercession” (PP 353), for day and night the holy incense diffused its fragrance throughout the sacred precincts of the Temple (PP 348).

10. Multitude. Gr. *plēthos*, a favorite word with Luke, who uses it 25 times, as compared with 7 times by all the other NT writers combined. Some commentators have suggested that Zacharias was officiating at the morning service; others think it was the evening service. In the time of Christ the morning sacrifice was offered about 9 o'clock and the evening sacrifice about 3 o'clock. At either of these times a throng of considerable size might gather (see Acts 2:6, 15). Perhaps the aged and pious Simeon and Anna (see on Luke 2:25, 36) mingled, unnoticed, in the group of worshipers at this very service and lifted their hearts in prayer for the coming of the Messiah.

Without. That is, outside the sanctuary, but within the sacred courts of the Temple.

11. Appeared. From the record it seems that the appearance of the angel was not merely in vision, but was actually apparent to normal sense perceptions.

Angel of the Lord. This was the angel Gabriel (see on v. 19), who more than five centuries previously had appeared to Daniel to announce the time of Messiah's coming (Dan. 9:21, 25). Now, with the Saviour's coming near, Gabriel appears to announce the birth of the prophet who is to prepare the people for the coming of the Promised One.

The right side. Of the altar. This was the south side, the positions being reckoned from the point of view of the altar's facing the east. The right side was often a position of honor (see Matt. 25:33; Acts 7:55, 56; Heb. 1:3; etc.), and Zacharias should have recognized the position as an indication of favor, but did not (DA 97, 98; see PP 351).

12. Fear fell upon him. The reaction of the aged priest could scarcely be considered unexpected or unnatural (see Judges 6:22; 13:22; Luke 2:9; 9:34; Acts 19:17).

13. Fear not. Often the first words of celestial beings when addressing men (Gen. 15:1; 21:17; Luke 1:30; 2:10). The agencies of heaven are constantly at work to remove fear from the hearts of consecrated men and women (see Heb. 1:14; 2:15) and to substitute for it “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Phil. 4:7). Perfect understanding of God and love for Him remove all fear from the human heart (see Matt. 6:30–34; 1 John 4:18).

Is heard. Literally, “was heard.” Some believe that the “prayer” heard was Zacharias’ prayer for the coming of the Messiah. From a study of the prophecies, particularly those of Daniel, Zacharias knew that the time for the Messiah to appear was at hand. For many years he had prayed for the realization of Israel’s hope, and now Gabriel assured him that the fulfillment of these prophecies was at hand (see DA 98). Others believe that the “prayer” heard was a previous prayer of Zacharias for a son. In years gone by Zacharias had no doubt prayed for a son (see Gen. 15:1, 2, 25:21; 30:22; 1 Sam. 1:10, 11; etc.). It is not likely, as some commentators suggest, that Zacharias prayed for a son upon this occasion, for his response to the angel (Luke 1:18) implies that he had already given up hope of having a son.

John. Gr. *Iōannēs*, from the Heb. *Yochanan*, or *Yehochanan*, meaning “Jehovah is gracious.” Various persons had borne this name (see 2 Kings 25:23; 1 Chron. 3:15; 26:3; 2 Chron. 17:15; Ezra. 10:6, 28; Neh. 12:13; Jer. 40:8).

14. Thou shalt have joy. Verses 14–18 are in the metrical form characteristic of Hebrew poetry, in which there is rhythm and repetition of thought rather than of measure and sound. The birth of a son to Elisabeth would bring Zacharias personal joy, but this personal joy would become a joy to all who should heed the message of the son and thereby be “prepared for the Lord” (v. 17; ch. 2:32).

15. Be great. In the estimation of Heaven it is not wealth, rank, noble descent, or intellectual gifts that constitute greatness. God values moral worth and prizes the attributes of love and purity. John was great “in the sight of the Lord” (see Matt. 11:11) in contrast with Herod, “great” in the sight of men who crave rank, wealth, and power. John was a great servant of his fellow men; Herod was a great tyrant over them. John lived for others; Herod lived for self alone. John was great in the same way that Elijah was great, in turning “many of the children of Israel ... to the Lord their God” (Luke 1:16). Herod was great in the same way that Nimrod was great (see on Gen. 10:9–12), in leading men to doubt and oppose God (Gen. 10:9, 10; see ch. 11:2–4). See pp. 41, 42; see on Matt. 11:13, 14.

Wine. Gr. *oinos* (see below under “strong drink”).

Strong drink. Gr. *sikera*, a loan word from the Aramaic *shikra*’ and the Heb. *shekar* (see on Num. 28:7). *Shekar* may be wine or any intoxicating drink like wine, whether made from barley or distilled from honey or dates. The root of the Hebrew verb means “to drink to the full,” “to drink to hilarity,” or “to be drunken.” Some commentators have thought that Luke’s use of the two terms *oinos*, “wine,” and *sikera*, “strong drink,” shows that intoxicating beverages made of grapes are not included in the term *sikera*. But this distinction is not justified because: (1) *Sikera* is simply a Greek transliteration of the Heb. *shekar*, which includes all intoxicating drinks. (2) The poetic form of vs. 14–17 does not justify a distinction as to kind between “wine” and “strong drink” any more than between “joy” and “gladness” in v. 14. When we speak of working with “might and main” we do not refer to two separate and distinct sources of power; we simply mean the exertion of all our strength. In the same way, Luke, or rather the angel Gabriel, uses the two terms merely to emphasize the exclusion of anything intoxicating.

Like Samson (Judges 13:4, 5) and Samuel (see on 1 Sam. 1:22), John the Baptist was a Nazirite from birth (DA 102). At all times a Nazirite (see on Gen. 49:26; Num. 6:2) was to keep the appetites and passions under strict subjection to principle (see on Judges 13:5). The important task assigned to John the Baptist would call for mental strength and spiritual insight, that he might stand as an example before the people of his time. In a similar way those who participate in the task of proclaiming the second coming of Christ must purify their lives “even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3).

Filled with the Holy Ghost. Rather than with strong drink (see Eph. 5:18). When at Pentecost the apostles were “filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:4, 15–17), they were accused of being “full of new wine” (v. 13). With those whom God has chosen for His service there must be no doubt as to the type of stimulation that moves them to action. The lower form of stimulation excludes the higher form. John was to be illuminated, sanctified, and guided by the influence of the Holy Spirit. In his Gospel and in the book of Acts, Luke mentions the Holy Spirit more than 50 times, compared with 13 times by all the other gospel writers combined.

From his mother’s womb. John’s very existence was due to the will and power of God, not of man. He came into the world with his assigned lifework, and was to be dedicated to God from the very first. It was possible for the Holy Spirit to “fill” John from birth because the Spirit had first been able to fill John’s mother, Elisabeth, directing and controlling her life. During the early years of the children, parents are to stand in the place of God to them (PP 308). “Happy are the parents whose lives are a true reflection of the divine” (PK 245). It was through the Holy Spirit that Mary received wisdom to cooperate with heavenly agencies in the development and training of Jesus (DA 69). Mothers today who choose to live in communion with God may expect the Divine Spirit to mold their little ones, “even from their earliest moments” (DA 512). Thus our children, like John the Baptist, may enjoy the happy privilege of being “filled with the Holy Ghost.” See on ch. 2:52.

16. Turn to the Lord. That is, by repentance. John’s baptism was a “baptism of repentance” (see Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 13:24; 19:4). Repentance, or turning from sin, was the keynote of his message. Men must repent if they would be “prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17) and if they would enter His kingdom (see Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7). John’s work was to persuade men to forsake their sins and to urge them to seek the Lord their God. This was the work that Elijah accomplished (see on 1 Kings 18:37). The OT narrative closes (see Mal. 3:1; 4:5, 6), and the NT narrative opens, on the theme of “the children of Israel” turning “to the Lord their God” (see Luke 1:16).

17. Go before him. As specifically prophesied by Isaiah (see on Isa. 40:3–5) and Malachi (see on Mal. 3:1). This is the task assigned to the remnant church today.

In vs. 16, 17 there is an inspired jewel of truth that lies half hidden. In v. 16 Luke affirms that John the Baptist would turn many of the children of Israel to the “Lord,” and then follows immediately with the comment: “He [John the Baptist] shall go before him [obviously the Messiah, but also the “Lord their God” of v. 16].” Clearly, though perhaps cryptically, Luke here points to the divinity of the Messiah.

The spirit and power of Elias. The dauntless courage of Elijah in days of apostasy and crisis (see 1 Kings 17:1; 18:1–19, 36–40) had made the prophet a symbol of thoroughgoing reformation and loyalty to God. A similar work was now needed in order to turn the hearts of men to the faith of their fathers (see John 8:56; 1 Peter 1:10, 11). The

work of John the Baptist as the forerunner of the Messiah had been made a matter of prophetic record (see Isa. 40:1–11; Mal. 3:1; 4:5, 6), as those who studied the Scriptures knew. Even the scribes recognized that “Elias must first come” before the coming of the Messiah (Matt. 17:10; Mark 9:11, 12). His message was one of reform and repentance (see Matt. 3:1–10). John resembled Elijah, not only in the work he was to do and in the fearlessness with which he was to proclaim truth (see 1 Kings 21:17–24; Matt. 3:7–10), but even in his manner of life and in his general appearance (see Matt. 3:4; see on 2 Kings 1:8). Both prophets suffered persecution (see 1 Kings 18:10; 19:2; Matt. 14:10).

Prophecies concerning the forerunner of the Messiah were so strikingly fulfilled in John the Baptist that the common people and also their leaders recognized the resemblance of John to Elijah (see John 1:19–21). Even after the death of John the priests, scribes, and elders did not dare deny that John was a prophet (Matt. 21:24–27; Mark 11:29–33; Luke 20:3–7). Nor did the heartless Herod dare take the life of John until circumstances seemingly drove him to do so (Matt. 14:3–11; Mark. 6:17–28; DA 222). John denied that he was Elijah in person (John 1:21), but Jesus affirmed that John came in fulfillment of the prophecies of the coming of Elijah (Matt. 11:9–14; 17:10–13). This fact was fully understood by the disciples (Matt. 17:13).

The very work accomplished by Elijah and John the Baptist is needed today. In these days of moral corruption and spiritual blindness there is need of voices that will fearlessly proclaim the coming of the Lord to the people of earth. The call of this hour is for men and women who will order their lives as did John and Elijah of old, and who will call upon others to do the same. There is needed a work of earnest reform, not only without the church, but within it as well. God calls upon all who would love and serve Him to go forth “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (3T 61, 62).

Hearts of the fathers. The context here and in Mal. 4:5, 6 suggests that figurative language is being used. Gabriel’s message was given in the literary form of Hebrew poetry, in which rhythm of thought is used instead of meter (see Vol. III, pp. 17–28). The “children of Israel” are to be turned to the “Lord their God,” their heavenly Father (Luke 1:16); the “disobedient,” to the “wisdom of the just” (v. 17). The work of John was to turn the hearts of the disobedient children of Israel in his generation to the wisdom of their just Father in heaven by turning their attention to the experiences of their “fathers” (see 1 Cor. 10:11). This was the very work Elijah had accomplished (see 1 Kings 18:36, 37). As spiritual descendants of our father Abraham (Gal. 3:29) we should, like him, in faith turn our hearts to God (Heb. 11:8–13, 39, 40), and ever remember the way by which He has led the “fathers” in ages past (see LS 196).

The declaration of Malachi, here cited by Luke, has also been explained literally as applying to parental responsibility in bringing up children in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). One of the first results of true conversion is the strengthening of family ties. Genuine reform ever does so. The home is certainly included in the work of reform here described as being an important aspect of making “ready a people prepared for the Lord.” See on v. 15.

Wisdom. Gr. *phronēsis*, “a minding [to do so and so],” “understanding,” “intention.” The “wisdom” of which the angel speaks is of the kind that leads a man to turn from disobedience to obedience, from injustice to justice. This transformation comes about not so much as the result of intellectual knowledge but from a change of mind (see Rom. 12:2) that accompanies a change of heart (see Eze. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26). It is only when a

man loves God that he wills to *obey* God (John 14:15; 15:10). It is when the affections are set “on things above” (Col. 3:2) that true “wisdom” takes possession of the heart and life.

A people prepared. The people of Noah’s day were not prepared for the Flood (ch. 17:27), nor were the people of Sodom for the destruction that overtook that city. The children of Israel who left Egypt were not prepared to enter the Promised Land (Heb. 3:19). The people of Christ’s day were not prepared to meet Him, and therefore “received him not” (see John 1:11). However, owing largely to the ministry of John the Baptist, there were some who were ready to receive Him. We are likewise counseled to be “ready” (Matt. 24:44), for it is those who are “ready” that will go in with Christ to the marriage (Matt. 25:10). It is the Christian who keeps the hope of our Lord’s return burning brightly in his heart who will be “prepared for the Lord” when He comes (see Heb. 9:28; 2 Peter 3:11, 12; 1 John 3:3).

18. Whereby shall I know? The promise seemed too good to be true! No doubt for years Zacharias had prayed for a son (see on v. 13), and now that his prayer was about to be answered his faith did not rise to accept the answer. How often men see difficulties in the way of the fulfillment of the promises of God, forgetting that “with God nothing shall be impossible” (v. 37). Thus it was with Sarah (see Gen. 18:11, 12), with Moses (see Ex. 4:1, 10, 13), with Gideon (see Judges 6:15–17, 36–40), and with the believers praying at the house of Mary for Peter’s release (see Acts 12:14–16). Even Abraham, who “staggered not at the promise of God” (Rom. 4:20), felt the need of tangible evidence upon which to rest his faith (see Gen. 15:8; 17:17).

I am an old man. The retirement age for Levites was 50 (see on Num. 8:24). However, priests retired from active service only when age or infirmity made it physically impossible for them to minister at the altar. Abraham and Sarah were described as “well stricken in age” when they were 99 and 89 years of age respectively (Gen. 18:11). At about the age of 92, Joshua was called “old and stricken in years” (see on Joshua 13:1), though he lived to be 110 (Joshua 24:29). David was said to be “old and stricken in years” (1 Kings 1:1) at the time of his death, in his 71st year (2 Sam. 5:4, 5). It is probably safe to conclude that Zacharias was between 60 and 70 years of age, perhaps closer to the latter.

Well stricken in years. See on v. 7.

19. Gabriel. Gr. *Gabriel*, from the Heb. *Gabri’el*, meaning “man of God.” The Hebrew word used for “man” is *geber*, implying a “man of strength.”

Gabriel occupies the position from which Lucifer fell (DA 693; GC 493), and stands next in honor and rank to Christ Himself (DA 98, 99, 234; Dan. 10:21). It was Gabriel who appeared to Daniel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21) to announce the coming of “the Messiah the Prince” (Dan. 9:25). In NT times he appeared to Zacharias (Luke 1:19), to Mary (vs. 26, 27), and probably it was he who appeared to Joseph (see on Matt. 1:20). It was Gabriel who strengthened Christ in Gethsemane (DA 693), who intervened between Him and the mob (DA 694), and who opened the tomb and bade the Saviour come forth (DA 779, 780). Gabriel was also one of the two angels who accompanied Christ through life (DA 793) and appeared to the disciples on Olivet as Christ ascended to heaven (DA 832; cf. 780). It was Gabriel who appeared to John on Patmos (DA 99; see on Rev. 1:1) and who spoke of himself as “thy fellowservant, and [the fellowservant] of thy brethren the prophets” (Rev. 22:9).

Stand in the presence. This expression is used in the OT of high officials ministering at court (1 Kings 10:8; 12:6; Prov. 22:29; Dan. 1:19). By this simple statement that reveals the honored position that is his in heaven, Gabriel accredits himself to Zacharias as a representative of God. Of guardian angels it is said that they “do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 18:10).

Gabriel is, as it were, the “prime minister” of heaven, the leader of the angelic host “sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). He is, in a special sense, the ambassador of heaven to this earth (DA 99). Not only has Gabriel fellowshiped with righteous men on earth; he has associated also with others. It was none other than he who appeared at the Persian court to influence Cyrus and Darius to issue the decree authorizing the rebuilding of the Temple (Dan. 10:13, 20; 11:1). He is the angel of prophecy, the one commissioned of Heaven to order the affairs of men in harmony with the will of God.

According to Jewish tradition Gabriel is the angel of judgment, and is one of four archangels, who alone have access to the divine presence at all times.

To shew ... glad tidings. Gr. *euaggelizō*, “to proclaim good news,” or “to announce glad tidings” (see on ch. 2:10).

20. Be dumb. Zacharias had expressed doubt at the angel’s word. Now he received a sign which was at the same time a penalty for unbelief. His lack of faith brought both judgment and blessing. His unbelief was cured immediately and thoroughly. At the same time his affliction was a means of drawing the attention of the people to the announcement of the birth of the forerunner of the Messiah. Not only did the condition of Zacharias attract the attention of the assembled multitude in the Temple courtyard (v. 22); it gave him an opportunity to communicate what he had seen and heard (DA 99), in a way they would never forget.

In some respects the experience of Zacharias is similar to that of Ezekiel in being made dumb (see Eze. 3:26) and remaining so (ch. 24:27) until the fulfillment of his message (ch. 33:22).

Believest not. Though it was not easy for Abraham to grasp the reality of God’s promise that his own son should be his heir (see Gen. 15:2, 3; 17:17, 18), he was ready to take the Lord at His word (see Gen. 15:6). He “was strong in faith” and “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief” (see Rom. 4:19–22). It seems that Zacharias, though “righteous” and “blameless” before God (Luke 1:6), did not measure up to Abraham when it came to the exercise of faith.

21. Waited. Literally, “were waiting,” that is, kept on waiting. Zacharias remained alone in the holy place longer than usual. Custom required that the priest offering incense at the morning and evening hours of prayer should not prolong his stay in the holy place, lest the people have occasion for anxiety. Furthermore, the people were not free to leave until the officiating priest came forth to pronounce the Aaronic benediction (see Num. 6:23–26). According to the Talmud, the offering of the incense at the golden altar was to be conducted with dispatch.

22. Could not speak. As the officiating priest came forth from the holy place after offering the incense, he was expected to raise his hands and pronounce a blessing upon the waiting throng.

Seen a vision. As Zacharias came forth his face was aglow with the glory of God (DA 99). His very appearance, in a sense, was an unspoken benediction, for the formula

of blessing included the words, “The Lord make his face shine upon thee” (Num. 6:25), and, “The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee” (v. 26). The first represented the graciousness of God, and the second, His gift of peace. No doubt many among the assembled worshippers thought of Moses as he returned from Mt. Sinai (see Ex. 34:29, 30, 35).

He beckoned. Rather, “he kept beckoning,” that is, making motions in an endeavor to explain to the people what had happened. Eventually, and perhaps by writing as well as beckoning, he succeeded in communicating to them what he had seen and heard (DA 99).

Speechless. Gr. *kōphos*, “blunted,” or “dull.” This could refer to speech or hearing or both. The narrative seems to imply that Zacharias became deaf as well as dumb (see on v. 62).

23. Ministration. Gr. *leitourgia*, a common Greek word denoting “public service.” In the LXX, *leitourgia* is used of the ministry of the priest in behalf of the congregation. The term is used in Heb. 8:6 and 9:21 of the “ministry” of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

Each “course” of priests remained on duty at the Temple from one Sabbath to the next. According to Jewish tradition, it was customary for the retiring set of priests to offer the morning incense on the Sabbath day, and for the incoming group to offer the evening incense. Accordingly, the “course of Abia,” to which Zacharias belonged (see on v. 5), remained on duty till the next Sabbath. Zacharias might have considered his experience with the angel sufficient to warrant his retiring early and returning home. But he chose to remain at his appointed post until released from service. The wording of v. 23 strongly implies that several days of his term of duty remained, and that therefore the appearance of the angel did not occur on the Sabbath day.

His own house. In “the hill country” of Judea (v. 39). Of the eight Judean towns assigned by Joshua to the priests (see on Joshua 21:9; cf. 1 Chron. 6:57–59), Hebron and Hilen (Holon) seem to qualify best for location in “the hill country.” Whether Hilen was rebuilt after the Captivity, and whether the cities originally assigned the priests by Joshua were theirs in the time of Christ, is not known. See on Luke 1:39.

24. Hid herself. Why Elisabeth concealed herself for the first five months of pregnancy is not clear. No known Jewish custom would have required her to do so, and the context implies that she did so voluntarily. Some commentators suggest that she remained at home until it would be evident that her “reproach” (see on v. 25) was removed. Others think that the mention of a period of five months is inserted merely in anticipation of Mary’s visit in the sixth month. It may be, however, that in anticipation of the dedicated life John was to live, as a Nazirite (see on v. 15), Elisabeth sought to remove herself from the usual contacts with society and to give thought and study to the responsibility of rearing a child to whom so important a task as that assigned John was to be entrusted. Such a motive would seem to be fully in harmony with Elisabeth’s character (see v. 6).

25. Reproach. That is, the misfortune of being childless presumably, according to the Jews, the greatest misfortune that could come to a woman (Gen. 30:1; 1 Sam. 1:5–8; see on Luke 1:7). Barrenness was commonly thought to be a visitation of God (see Gen. 16:2; 30:1, 2; 1 Sam. 1:5, 6), and prayer was in such circumstances made for His favor (see Gen. 25:21; 1 Sam. 1:10–12), that He would “remember” those thus afflicted. When conception occurred following prayers such as these it was said that God “remembered”

them (see Gen. 30:22; 1 Sam. 1:19). Throughout the Scriptures children are thought of as being a blessing bestowed by God (see Gen. 33:5; 48:4; Ex. 23:26; Joshua 24:3; Ps. 113:9; 127:3; 128:3). In contrast, among heathen nations children were commonly exposed or offered as burnt offerings to their gods.

26. The sixth month. [*The Annunciation, Luke 1:26–38.* See The Nativity; a Suggestive Chronology of Christ's Birth.] That is, the sixth month after the appearance of Gabriel to Zacharias (v. 11), and Elizabeth's conception (v. 24), as specifically stated by the angel (see v. 36).

Gabriel. See on vs. 11, 19.

Nazareth. An obscure Galilean town not mentioned in the OT or the Talmud, or included by Josephus in a list of 204 towns of Galilee (see on Matt. 2:23). The childhood and youth of Jesus, the period on which the Scriptures are comparatively silent, were spent in a locality concerning which historical records are largely silent. Here, in a small community, Jesus was free from the rabbinical influence of larger Jewish centers, and also from pagan Greek culture that pervaded "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matt. 4:15). The common attitude of the Jews toward Nazareth is reflected in the retort of Nathanael to Philip: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46), and of the Pharisees to Nicodemus, "Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (John 7:52). See illustration facing p. 512.

The fact that Luke locates both Mary and Joseph as living in Nazareth and specifically calls it "their own city" (ch. 2:39) is evidence of the historical accuracy of the gospel narrative. Had he, or others from whom he had received his information (vs. 1–3), invented the story, they would have sought to have Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem throughout the narrative of Christ's conception and birth, rather than in a city of Galilee, particularly in view of the unfavorable reputation of Galilee in general and of Nazareth in particular. The fact that Matthew does not mention Nazareth in connection with events preceding the birth of Jesus (see Matt. 1:18–25) bears witness also to the independent nature of the evidence recorded in the two Gospels. Had there been collusion between the various gospel writers, with an intent to deceive, they would have taken greater care to give their accounts at least the semblance of superficial similarity—which is not the case. Luke's explanatory statement that Nazareth was "a city of Galilee" may be evidence, as some think, that Luke was writing for nonresidents of Palestine, who would be unfamiliar with so obscure a town.

27. A virgin. See on Matt 1:23. The fact that in giving so detailed an account of the circumstances of the birth of Jesus Luke makes no mention of Mary's parents, suggests that they may have been dead at this time, and that Mary may have been living with some of her relatives (see DA 144, 145). Almost without exception, Jewish writers identified those of whom they spoke, as the sons and daughters of certain named persons.

Espoused. See on Matt. 1:18. The sequence of events here is significant. The angel made the announcement of the birth of Jesus following Mary's engagement. To be told at a time when no plans had been laid for marriage that she was to bear a child would no doubt have greatly distressed her. On the other hand, if the announcement had *followed* her marriage to Joseph, even Mary and Joseph would have considered Jesus their own child. Evidence of the virgin birth would have been difficult, if not impossible, to establish. The purposefulness in the sequence of events testifies to the divine plan and overruling providence of God. If Joseph was ready to "divorce" Mary upon hearing that

she was “with child” (Matt. 1:18, 19), and was restrained from doing so only by a direct revelation from God (vs. 20, 24), it probably would have been far more difficult to reconcile him to the idea of contracting a marriage with her had she already been found pregnant (v. 19). Divine planning made the situation as easy as possible for both Mary and Joseph. Mary was indeed a “virgin,” but she was betrothed. God had already provided her with a helper and protector before announcing to her the coming birth of Jesus.

Joseph. See on Matt. 1:18. Little is known of Joseph aside from his Davidic descent (Matt. 1:6–16), his poverty (see on Luke 2:24), his trade (Matt. 13:55), the fact that he had four sons (Matt. 12:46; 13:55, 56; DA 87), and that he evidently died before Jesus began His ministry (see DA 145). The last definite event recorded of Joseph occurred when Jesus was 12 (Luke 2:51). The absence of any further reference to Joseph raises a reasonable presumption that he died before Jesus began His ministry (see on ch. 2:51). The fact that Jesus entrusted the care of His mother to John at the cross (John 19:26, 27) is practically positive proof that the death of Joseph had occurred prior to that time.

House of David. That is, the royal family (see on Matt. 1:1, 20). Opinion differs as to whether the expression “of the house of David” here refers to Mary or to Joseph. The repetition of the word “virgin” in the last clause of the verse implies that the phrase in question refers to Joseph rather than Mary. In any event, Joseph’s Davidic descent is clearly stated in Luke 2:4. But Mary was also “of the house of David” (see on Matt. 1:16; Luke 1:32; DA 44). It was through Mary that Jesus was literally “of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:3). That Mary was a descendant of David seems to be taken for granted in Luke 1:32, 69. These and other statements of Scripture would lose much of their force and meaning unless Mary could claim David as an ancestor. The reference in v. 36 to Elisabeth as Mary’s “cousin” cannot be construed as requiring Mary to be of the tribe of Levi, as some have thought (see on v. 36). Mary and Joseph were both of royal descent, as Zacharias and Elizabeth were of priestly lineage (v. 5).

Mary. See on Matt. 1:16. Luke gives the birth narrative of Jesus from the viewpoint of Mary, a fact some commentators take as implying that Luke had personally heard the story from her lips or from someone else who had talked with her (see on vs. 1–3). The great detail and the exquisite beauty of Luke’s narration certainly suggest intimate acquaintance with the facts, either by direct contact with persons who witnessed them (v. 2) or by inspiration. Luke’s mention of “eyewitnesses” implies that both factors were involved—an eyewitness account, safeguarded, of course, by inspiration.

28. Hail. Gr. *chaire*, an ancient common form of salutation (see Matt. 28:9) that expressed esteem and good will. The word thus translated is the imperative form of the verb *chairō*, “to rejoice,” or “to be glad.” This form of greeting may be compared with the salutation, “Peace be unto you” (Luke 24:36; etc.), a common form of greeting in the Orient today as well as in ancient times.

Highly favoured. Literally, “endowed with grace.” This expression designates Mary as the recipient of divine favor, or grace, not the dispenser of it. The Latin phrase, *plena gratia*, of the Vulgate, is rendered “full of grace” by Wyclif, Tyndale, and by various Catholic translations. But this phrase does violence to the statement of the angel if taken to imply that Mary was henceforth to be a *dispenser* of divine grace rather than a *recipient* of it. Gabriel did not endow her with personal merit to bestow upon others. That

the angel bestowed upon Mary nothing more than is available to all Christian believers is clear from the use of the same Greek word in Eph. 1:6, where Paul states that “he [the Father] hath made us accepted” (literally, “he endowed us with grace”) in Christ—not in Mary, significantly. Mary was “highly favoured” only, as the angel explains, because the Lord was with her. She had “found favour with God” (Luke 1:30) and was, literally, “endowed with grace.”

Mary is nowhere called “blessed” except by Elisabeth (v. 42) and by an unnamed woman (ch. 11:27), and to the statement of the latter Jesus personally took exception (v. 28). He ever treated His mother with courtesy and consideration (see on John 2:4), but never exalted her above others who heard and believed in Him (Matt. 12:48, 49). At the cross He did not refer to her as the “Mother of God,” or even as “mother”—He simply addressed her as “woman,” a title of respect (see on John 19:26). Neither Paul nor any other NT writer attributes to her any extraordinary merit, or influence with God.

The Catholic exaltation of Mary has no basis in Scripture, but is founded entirely upon the fantastic legends of the apocryphal gospels, which even Catholics themselves deny a place in the sacred canon. In the early Christian centuries these legends were combined with pagan myths concerning the Oriental “queen of heaven” (see Jer. 7:18; 44:17, 18; etc.), consort of the gods, and the Magna Mater, or Great Mother, of Asia Minor. The Catholic concept of Mary as the “Mother of God” is basically little more than this pagan female deity clad in Christian terminology, made dogma at the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431. Ephesus, incidentally, was the home of Diana, Gr. *Artemis*; not, however, the Greek virgin goddess Artemis, but an Asiatic mother goddess sometimes identified with the “Great Mother.” According to tradition, Mary spent her last years at Ephesus, in the home of the apostle John.

The words of the angel’s salutation have been perverted by the Catholic Church into a prayer addressed to Mary as an intercessor. According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, it is composed of the angel’s words (1), with the addition (before 1184) of the opening words of Elisabeth’s inspired greeting to Mary found in v. 42 (2), and the further addition (by 1493) of a plea for prayer (3), and a still later addition (4), made by 1495, and included in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, with the entire form officially recognized in the Roman Breviary of 1568. Thus artificially constructed, the Ave Maria reads as follows:

- [1] “Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;
- [2] blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
- [3] Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
- [4] now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

Is with thee. The word “is” has been supplied by the translators, inasmuch as in the Greek it is often understood rather than expressed. Perhaps “be with thee” may be preferable to “is with thee.” This was a common form of greeting in OT times (see Judges 6:12; Ruth 2:4).

Blessed art thou among women. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of this clause. It is attested, however, in v. 42 (see on v. 42).

29. Troubled. Gr. *diatarassō*, “to agitate greatly,” or “to trouble greatly.” Mary was perplexed at the sudden, unexpected appearance of the angel, but even more so at the high honor expressed in the angel’s extraordinary salutation to her. She was “troubled,” but self-composed.

Cast in her mind. Literally, “was reasoning,” or “was deliberating.” Though “troubled,” Mary endeavored to think things through and to discover the reason for this unusual experience. Under such circumstances many people would probably lose, for the moment, the capacity for deliberative thought. Mary seems to have been not only a virtuous and devout maiden but one of remarkable intelligence as well. Not only had she an unusual acquaintance with the Scriptures, but she also reflected upon the meaning of the various experiences that life brought her (see ch. 2:19, 51). Unlike Zacharias, who became afraid (ch. 1:12), Mary seems to have kept her presence of mind.

30. Fear not. See v. 29; see on v. 13. Addressing her as “Mary,” the angel revealed the fact that he knew her personally. This, and the statement following, were designed to inspire confidence.

Favour. Gr. *charis*, “grace,” generally considered to be from the same root as *chairō*, “rejoice” (see on v. 28), a favorite word of early Christians. God was delighted to find in Mary one who approached so closely to the divine ideal.

31. Conceive. The wording of v. 31 resembles somewhat that of Gen. 16:11, where a similar promise was made to Hagar. The angel announced the fulfillment of the promise made to Eve (see on Gen. 3:15).

How the King of the universe *could* and *would* thus condescend to be “made flesh” (John 1:14), to be “made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4), “in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7), is an unfathomable and incomprehensible mystery that Inspiration has not seen fit to reveal. With what awe and reverence heaven must have watched the Son of God “step down from the throne of the universe” (DA 23), depart from the courts of glory, and condescend to take upon Himself humanity, to be made “in all things . . . like unto his brethren” (Heb. 2:17), to humble Himself and be “found in fashion as a man” (see Additional Note on John 1; see on Phil. 2:7, 8).

With awe and reverence we too ought to contemplate the matchless love of God in giving His only Son to take our nature (John 3:16). By His humiliation Christ bound “Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken” (DA 25). In this marvelous gift the character of God stands forth in utter contrast with the character of the evil one, who, though a created being, sought to exalt himself and “be like the most High” (Isa. 14:14).

Call his name. See on Matt. 1:21.

32. He shall be great. There is a striking similarity between verses 32, 33 and Isa. 9:6, 7; one is a clear reflection of the other. Six months earlier Gabriel had told Zacharias that John would be “great” (Luke 1:15).

Called. Here used with the meaning “recognized,” “acknowledged,” or “known,” as in Matt. 21:13. The divine Sonship of Christ was announced by God to the angels of heaven (Heb. 1:5, 6), and confessed by His disciples (Matt. 16:16; John 16:30) and NT writers (Rom. 1:4; Heb. 4:14; 1 John 5:5; etc.).

Son of the Highest. Compare v. 35. At the baptism the Father declared Jesus to be His Son (ch. 3:22). The same statement was again made, a few months before the crucifixion (Matt. 17:5). All today who do “that which is wellpleasing in his sight” (Heb. 13:21) have the privilege of being called “children of the Highest” (Luke 6:35). See on John 1:1–3; see Additional Note on John 1.

The throne. According to the prophet Isaiah, “The Prince of Peace” was to sit upon the “throne of David” to administer “his kingdom” (Isa. 9:6, 7). That this “throne” represents the eternal kingdom of Christ, and not a restoration of a literal kingdom of

David in this present world, is evident throughout the NT (see John 18:36; etc.; see on Luke 4:19).

His father David. See on Matt. 1:1, 16, 20; Luke 1:27. The literal descent of Jesus from David is clearly affirmed in both the OT and the NT (Ps. 132:11; Acts 2:30; Rom. 1:3). Even the sworn enemies of Christ did not deny that the Messiah would be “David’s son” (Luke 20:41–44). The glorious reign of David became for the holy prophets a unique symbol of the coming Messianic kingdom (Isa. 9:6, 7; cf. 2 Sam. 7:13; Ps. 2:6, 7; 132:11; see Vol. IV, p. 31).

The expression “his father David” is significant. Jesus could have been the Son of David as the Son of Joseph, or of Mary, or of both. Mary obviously understood the angel to mean that the conception of Jesus would be by the Holy Spirit only (vs. 34, 35). Hence the angel’s statement pointing to David as the “father” of Jesus could be understood to mean that Mary was herself a descendant of David (see on Matt. 1:16; cf. DA 44).

33. He shall reign. It is noteworthy that in the angelic messages and prophetic utterances given with reference to the birth of Christ, little intimation was given of Christ’s role as the suffering One. Here, for instance, Gabriel looks forward to the glorious climax of the plan of salvation, completely passing over any reference to the crucifixion. Perhaps the rejoicing in heaven at the birth of the Saviour, and of those few on earth who recognized and received Him, made it seem inappropriate to mention the cross that must precede the crown. Jesus Himself, “the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,” will sit “down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). How often the prophets of the OT lifted inspired eyes from the distress brought about by sin to the ultimate glory of the universe purified from all traces of sin!

House of Jacob. That is, Jacob’s descendants. In a spiritual sense these include all who believe in Christ, whether they be Jew or Gentile (Rom. 2:25–29; Gal. 3:26–29; 1 Peter 2:9, 10; etc.).

For ever. Literally, “into the ages” (see on Matt. 13:39). Holy men of old looked forward to the time when the transitory things of earth would give place to the enduring realities of eternity. The kingdoms of earth which, from a human point of view, often appear to rise majestically, one after another, fade away like houses of ice under a summer sun. Men strive for permanency and security; but these will never be achieved until Christ sets up His kingdom—one that will “never be destroyed” (Dan. 2:44), one that will “not pass away” (Dan. 7:14), one that will be “an everlasting kingdom” (see on Ps. 145:13) and endure “even for ever” (Micah 4:7). The promise of the Father that the kingdom of His Son should be “for ever and ever” (Heb. 1:8) was not unknown to the Jews of Christ’s day (Ps. 45:6, 7; cf. John 12:34).

34. How shall this be? The context implies that Mary believed the angel’s announcement unhesitatingly. In simple faith Mary asked how the coming miracle would take place.

Know. That is, carnal knowledge. Mary could speak as a pure maiden, affirming her virginity (see on Matt. 1:23). Her manner of expressing this fact is the common Hebrew idiom for premarital chastity (see Gen. 19:8; Judges 11:39; etc.). As He so often does with us today, God first let Mary become fully conscious of the fact that the anticipated event was beyond human power, that it was impossible from man’s point of view, before presenting to her the means by which it would be brought about. It is thus that God leads

us to appreciate His goodness and His power and teaches us to have confidence in Him and in His promises.

The attempt to read a vow of perpetual virginity into these words of Mary is altogether unwarranted (see on Matt. 1:25). To remain thus a virgin in perpetuity was generally considered a reproach by the Jews, not a virtue. Inability to bear children was ever the occasion of chagrin and remorse on the part of a wife (see Gen. 30:1; 1 Sam. 1:4–7; etc.). The idea that she remained ever a virgin arose in later centuries, probably from a perverted sense of what constitutes virtue. It implies that the home, a divinely ordained institution, does not represent the highest ideal of social life. See on Matt. 19:3–12.

35. The Holy Ghost. See on Matt. 1:18, 20. Celsus was one of the first to charge Mary with being a victim of seduction.

Come upon thee. An expression often used to describe the reception of the power of the Holy Spirit (Judges 6:34; 1 Sam. 10:6; 16:13).

Power. Gr. *dunamis*, “power,” “strength,” or “ability,” as contrasted with *exousia*, “power,” in the sense of “authority.” *Dunamis* is commonly used in the Gospels to refer to the miracles of Christ (Matt. 11:20–23; Mark 9:39; etc.). Here, the “power of the Highest” is parallel to “the Holy Ghost,” not meaning, however, that the Holy Ghost is merely the expression of divine power, but that He is the agency through which divine power is exercised. The words of the angel were spoken in Hebrew poetic style, in which there is a rhythm of thought rather than of rhyme and meter (see Luke 1:32, 33, 35 in RSV; Vol. III, p. 23).

Son of God. Here the angel Gabriel affirms the true deity of Jesus Christ, yet links that deity inseparably to His true humanity. The Son of Mary would be the Son of God because conception was to take place by means of the overshadowing “power of the Highest.”

From this and other Scriptures some have concluded that the title Son of God was first applied to Christ at the incarnation. Others have reached the conclusion that the title is descriptive of the preincarnate relationship of Christ to the Father. Still others consider the term Son of God as properly used of the preincarnate Christ in a proleptic sense, or in connection with His role in the plan of salvation. The writers and editors of this commentary, however, do not find that the Scriptures set forth any of these views in clear and unmistakable language. Consequently, to speak dogmatically on the matter would be to affirm more than Inspiration has revealed. Here silence is golden.

The numerous names and titles given Christ in Scripture are designed to aid our minds in understanding His relation to us in the varied aspects of His work for our salvation. There are some who unhesitatingly apply names and titles descriptive of Christ’s work as the Saviour of this world, to His absolute and eternal relationships to the sinless beings of the universe. To do so may lead us into the fallacy of accepting human language as a wholly adequate expression of a divine mystery.

The Scriptures point to the resurrection as an event confirming to Jesus the title “Son of God.” The psalmist wrote, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Ps. 2:7). Paul quotes this “promise which was made unto the fathers” and adds immediately that “God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again” (Acts 13:32, 33; cf. Matt. 28:18; Rom. 1:4; Phil. 2:8–10; Heb. 1:5–8).

Jesus seldom referred to Himself by the title “Son of God” (John 9:35–37; 10:36), though He often implied the Father and Son relationship (Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:21; John 5:18–23; 10:30; 14:28; etc.). Before stepping “down from the throne of the universe” (see DA 23; PP 64) Christ was “equal with God” (Phil. 2:6), “one with the Father” (DA 19; see also John 10:30). At the incarnation He voluntarily humbled Himself and accepted a position subordinate to the Father (Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:9). Various statements by Christ while here on earth testify to His voluntary and temporary surrender of the prerogatives, though not the nature, of Deity (Phil. 2:6–8), as when He said, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28), or, “The Son can do nothing of himself” (John 5:19). See on Luke 2:49.

The Father attested Christ’s Sonship at His birth (Luke 1:35; Heb. 1:5, 6), at His baptism (Luke 3:22), at His transfiguration (Luke 9:35), and again at His resurrection (Ps. 2:7; Acts 13:32, 33; Rom. 1:4). John the Baptist also bore witness to Him as the “Son of God” (John 1:34), and the Twelve came to recognize Him as such (Matt. 14:33; 16:16). Even the evil spirits admitted that He was the Son of God (Mark 3:11; 5:7). After healing the man born blind, Christ testified before the leaders that He was the “Son of God” (John 10:35–37). It was His admission to being indeed *the* “Son of God” that finally brought about His condemnation and death (Luke 22:70, 71).

Christ referred to God as “my Father” (Matt. 16:17). He desires that we learn to know God as “our Father” (Matt. 6:9), and understand how God thinks of us (see on Matt. 6:9). “Christ teaches us to address Him [God] by a new name. ... He gives us the privilege of calling the infinite God our Father,” as “a sign of our love and trust toward Him, and a pledge of His regard and relationship to us” (COL 141, 142; see also 388).

Of Christ God says, “I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son” (Heb. 1:5). And of one who by faith is adopted into the heavenly family as a son of “our Father,” God says again, “I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Rev. 21:7). He who is truly “begotten of God” (1 John 5:18) “overcometh the world” (v. 4) as Christ did, and “sinneth not” (v. 18). The grand objective of the plan of salvation is to bring “many sons unto glory” (Heb. 2:10; cf. 1 John 3:1, 2). See Additional Note on John 1; see on Matt. 16:16–20; Mark 2:10; Luke 2:49.

36. Cousin. Gr. *suggenis*, “kinswoman” or “relative.” *Suggenis* does not necessarily mean “cousin,” for it implies no more than that Mary and Elisabeth were relatives, with no indication as to degree of relationship. The law made provision for the intermarriage of the tribes (see on Num. 36:6), and members of the tribes of Levi and Judah often intermarried. Elisabeth was of the tribe of Levi (see on Luke 1:5); Mary was of the tribe of Judah (see on vs. 27, 32). If Mary was of Judah, it seems that Mary’s father would also be of Judah, and therefore it is probable that Mary’s connection with Elisabeth was either through her mother or through Elisabeth’s mother. The word “cousin” was first used here in Wyclif’s translation, at a time when the word did not have the specific meaning it does now. There is no exact term in Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic to denote what we describe as a “cousin.” A misunderstanding of the problem has led some commentators to the false conjecture that Jesus was a descendant of both Levi and Judah. There is, however, no evidence whatsoever to indicate that Mary was other than a direct descendant of David (see on v. 27).

In her old age. See on v. 7.

37. Nothing shall be impossible. The thought of this verse is expressed repeatedly throughout the Scriptures. To Abraham came the question, “Is any thing too hard for the

Lord?” (see on Gen. 18:14). Through Isaiah God proclaimed, “My word ... shall not return unto me void” (Isa. 55:11).

38. Behold the handmaid. Not an imperative but an exclamation, representing resignation to the will of God. The matter was settled with Mary as soon as it became clear to her what God’s will was, and as soon as sufficient information had been imparted to her to enable her to carry out her part intelligently.

Be it unto me. Mary gives further expression to a meek and submissive spirit. The unaffected dignity, purity, simplicity, and delicacy with which Luke relates the story bears the mark of historical fact, not of imaginative writing. Efforts of some to shame Mary, and of others to deify her, are equally unjustified by the facts of Scripture.

39. Mary arose. [*Mary’s Visit to Elisabeth, Luke 1:39–56.* See The Nativity.] Mary’s visit to the home of Elisabeth no doubt occurred almost immediately after the announcement of the birth of Jesus, because the announcement came in the sixth month of Elisabeth’s pregnancy, and Mary remained with her about three months (see vs. 1:26, 56). Furthermore, Mary made the journey “with haste.”

In those days. That is, soon after the announcement of the birth of Jesus.

The hill country. See on v. 23. The mountainous uplands of Judah extended from Jerusalem in the north to Hebron in the south (see Joshua 21:11).

With haste. Here the expression seems to refer not so much to the rate of speed with which Mary made the journey as to the eagerness of her desire to be with Elisabeth. Mary had just become the recipient of one of the greatest secrets of time and eternity (see Rom. 16:25), and must have felt an intense desire to talk over the matter with someone who could understand. And who was in a better position to understand than Elisabeth, for she, according to the angel, was experiencing a miracle herself. Furthermore, Elisabeth’s years of devotion to the revealed will of God would enable her not only to listen with a sympathetic ear but to give valuable counsel and guidance to Mary, a young woman confronted now with a major problem and responsibility (see Luke 1:6). The angel had pointed to Elisabeth’s experience as a sign of the fulfillment of his words to Mary (see on v. 7). Mary did not go in order to discover whether what the angel had said was true, but rather *because* she believed his words.

Fellowship with someone who can understand our inmost feelings is one of the precious treasures life has to offer. The value of Christian fellowship and communion is beyond estimation. The fathers and mothers in Israel, in particular, have a solemn obligation to share their experience in the will and ways of God with those who are younger. Those young people who, like Mary, seek the counsel of their elders are more likely to choose a course of action that will bring gladness to their hearts and success to their endeavors. No Christian should ever be too busy to fellowship with those who may be in need of the help he is in a position to give.

A city of Juda. According to tradition this was the city of Hebron, chief of the nine cities in the tribes of Simeon and Judah assigned the priests (see Joshua 21:13–16; 1 Chron. 6:57–59). Here was the first land Abraham owned in Canaan (see Gen. 23:17–19), and it was here that David first was anointed king (see 2 Sam. 2:1, 4). Some have suggested that “Juda” is a variant spelling in the Hebrew for “Juttah” (Joshua 15:55; 21:16), another priestly city, about 5 mi. south of Hebron. However, this identification is not supported by any evidence, scriptural, historical, or archeological. Furthermore, Luke

refers to Nazareth as “a city of Galilee” (ch. 1:26), and it would seem most likely that the parallel expression, “a city of Juda,” would make of “Juda” a province and not a city.

40. *Saluted Elisabeth.* Mary and Elisabeth immediately found themselves bound together by a common bond of sympathy. It was apparent to Mary that the sign given by the angel (v. 36) was indeed true, and this confirmed her faith. Also, Zacharias was still speechless, and his dumbness, now of six months’ duration, attested the appearance of the angel to him and served as a continuing rebuke to his earlier lack of faith.

41. *Leaped.* Gr. *skirtaō*, the same word found in the LXX in reference to Jacob and Esau before their birth (Gen. 25:22). Motion by an unborn child is common enough; but on this occasion Elisabeth, by inspiration, rightly interpreted the movement (Luke 1:41–43) as having more than ordinary meaning. The suggestion some have made, to the effect that the unborn child was inspired and recognized the presence of the Messiah, may be dismissed as highly imaginative.

Elisabeth was filled. Upon this occasion it was *Elisabeth* who was “filled with the Holy Ghost.” The angel had told Mary about Elisabeth (v. 36), but until this moment Elisabeth apparently knew nothing about the experience that had come to Mary.

42. *Blessed.* Gr. *eulogeō*, “to bless,” derived from *eu*, “well,” and *logos*, “a word.” “Blessed art thou” is an expression based on OT usage (see Judges 5:24; Ruth 3:10).

43. *My Lord.* In the heart of Elisabeth there was no envy of Mary, but only humility and joy. A similar confession of faith was later made by Peter (Matt. 16:16), a confession that came to him as a revelation. Paul declared that only “by the Holy Ghost” can any man “say that Jesus is the Lord” (1 Cor. 12:3).

44. *For joy.* A figure of speech, attributing to the unborn child this emotion.

45. *Blessed is she.* That is, Mary, who is here congratulated for her faith and for the high honor that has come to her. Perhaps Elisabeth was thinking of her husband’s unbelief, and of the evidence of divine disfavor that resulted. God is honored and pleased when His earthborn children accept His promises in humble and unquestioning faith. “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

For. Gr. *hoti*, which has the two basic meanings “that,” or “because.” Either meaning makes good sense here.

46. *Mary said.* The gift of inspiration now seems to fall upon Mary, who speaks forth in calm and majestic strains. Every idea, even her very words, reflect what inspired men had written in times past. The song of Mary (vs. 46–55) is considered one of the most sublime hymns in all sacred literature, a lyric of exquisite beauty worthy of Mary’s ancestor David. It is pervaded by a spirit of humble adoration and thankfulness, and glorifies the power, holiness, and mercy of God. It expresses her personal emotion and experience as she meditated upon the message of the angel Gabriel.

The song of Mary is frequently designated the Magnificat, “Magnifies,” from its first word in the Latin Vulgate. The first half of the song is concerned with Mary’s personal thankfulness (vs. 46–50); the second half turns on the note of national thanksgiving (vs. 51–55). This song reveals the character of God and emphasizes God’s grace (v. 48), omnipotence (vs. 49, 51), holiness (v. 49), mercy (v. 50), justice (vs. 52, 53), and faithfulness (vs. 54, 55). The poetic quality of the song becomes more impressive when it is printed in poetic form. It is divided into four strophes, or stanzas, as follows:

1. (vs. 46–48) Here Mary thinks primarily of herself, of her deep feelings of adoration and holy joy. She has been chosen and honored above women, and marvels that God has taken notice of her and passed others by. She is aware of nothing that would commend her to God.

2. (vs. 49, 50) In this strophe Mary glorifies the power, holiness, and mercy of God.

3. (vs. 51–53) Here stand forth in sharp contrast the character values esteemed by God and man. God's conception of what constitutes true greatness is the antithesis of man's estimation of greatness.

4. (vs. 54, 55) The song of Mary closes on a note of gratitude for the eternal faithfulness of God to His chosen people.

The song of Mary has often been compared with that of Hannah (see 1 Sam. 2:1–10), which was a prayer of thanksgiving for Samuel. Both breathe forth faith and joy adoration, but that of Mary reflects, perhaps, a more exalted concept of God. The words are gleaned from the best the prophets of the intervening millennium had written. Mary's song is also reminiscent of the song of Moses (see Ex. 15) and that of Deborah and Barak (see Judges 5), and is similar in spirit to Ps. 113 and 126, among others. Slight textual evidence (cf. p. 146) attributes this song to Elisabeth rather than to Mary. Unquestionably, however, it was Mary's.

The song of Mary reflects the thought of the following OT passages: Luke 1:46 (1 Sam. 2:1; Ps. 103:1), v. 47 (1 Sam. 2:1), v. 48 (Gen. 30:13; 1 Sam. 1:11), v. 49 (Deut. 10:21; Ps. 111:9), v. 50 (Ps. 103:17), v. 51 (Ps. 89:10), v. 52 (1 Sam. 2:7–10; Job 5:11; 12:19), v. 53 (1 Sam. 2:5; Ps. 107:9), v. 54 (Ps. 98:3; Isa. 41:8), v. 55 (2 Sam. 22:51; Micah 7:20).

My soul. In view of the fact that the joyous song of Mary is poetic in form, and because Hebrew poetry consists essentially in the repetition of the same thought in different words, there seems little validity to the claim that some have made that there is a difference between “soul” in v. 46 and “spirit” in v. 47. In both statements Mary is simply referring to her mental, emotional, and spiritual appreciation of the honor bestowed upon her as mother of the Messiah.

Magnify. Gr. *megalunō*, “to make [or declare] great,” “to exalt,” or “to extol.” Man can do nothing to enhance the greatness and majesty of God, but when a clearer understanding of the character, will, and ways of God comes to him he should be conscious, as was Mary, of the more glorious revelation. To “magnify” the Lord means to declare His greatness.

47. God my Saviour. Like every other human being, Mary was in need of salvation. It never occurred to her that she had been born without sin, as some have unscripturally contended.

Writers of the OT speak of the “Rock” of salvation (Deut. 32:15; Ps. 95:1), the “God” of salvation (Ps. 24:5), and often refer to God as “Saviour” (Isa. 63:8; etc.).

48. He hath regarded. To the humble heart it is amazing that God, who guides the celestial orbs through infinite space, condescends to “dwell” with those who are “contrite and humble” in spirit (see Isa. 57:15). He has not only taken notice of us in our “low estate” of sin, but has devoted the limitless resources of heaven to our salvation.

Low estate. Gr. *tapeinōsis*, “lowness,” “low estate,” or “humiliation.” The word refers to Mary's lowly station in life, not to her spirit of humility. But even in the “low estate”

Mary had “found favour with God,” and this was to her of more value than all the treasures and all the honor and respect earth had to offer.

Call me blessed. That is, think me happy and honored. Leah gave utterance to a similar thought upon the birth of Asher (see Gen. 30:13).

49. Holy is his name. Expressing a thought independent of those that precede and that follow. Mary’s statement reflects the awe and reverence felt by the Jews for the sacred name of God, *Yahweh* (see on Ex. 3:14, 15; cf. Vol. I, pp. 171-173). Later, the Christians esteemed the name of Jesus with similar reverence, though without fear of using it, albeit respectfully (see Acts 3:6; 4:10; etc.).

50. His mercy. That is, His abounding love and favor, bestowed even when it is least deserved. It has been remarked that grace takes away the fault, and mercy removes the misery, of sin.

Fear him. A typically Hebrew expression for piety, common throughout the OT. Fear is also used in the NT in the sense of godly reverence (Acts 10:2, 22, 35; Col. 3:22; Rev. 14:7; 15:4), though the same word is used also of fright and panic (Matt. 21:46; Mark 11:32; Luke 12:4).

51. Shewed strength. Another typically Hebrew expression. By the figure of metonymy the “arm” is the symbol of power (see Ex. 6:6; Ps. 10:15; 136:12). The expression, “shewed strength,” or “made strong,” is used by Greek classical authors, as here, to denote victory over one’s enemies.

The proud. Or, “the haughty.” God confutes them, as if they had been scattered and their plans disrupted by a whirlwind. Pride is the essence of sin. It was pride in the heart of Lucifer that occasioned rebellion in heaven (see Isa. 14:12–14). A false sense of pride leaves its possessor, for the time being, beyond the reach of help that God might bring to him. Nothing is more offensive to God than pride, which consists essentially in self-exaltation and a corresponding depreciation of others. Little wonder that the Scriptures affirm, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18). Jesus said, “Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:11). Humility is the very opposite of pride, and is a trait most precious in the sight of God (see on v. 48).

Imagination. Gr. *dianoia*, “mind,” or “understanding”; that is, intellectual insight or moral understanding. *Dianoia* refers to the faculty of thought, especially to moral understanding.

52. Mighty. Gr. *dunastai*, “princes,” or “potentates,” the source of our word “dynasty.” *Dunastai* is from *dunamai*, “to be able,” “to be powerful,” whence our word “dynamite.” The reference here is particularly to oppressors. Perhaps Mary had in mind the cruel tyrant Herod, who murdered not only thousands of the Jews but even his closest relatives (see pp. 39-42). Contemporary Jewish literature also reveals the fact that the common people often suffered intensely from economic oppression.

Their seats. Literally, “their thrones.”

Them of low degree. Gr. *tapeinoi*, “lowly [ones],” or “humble [ones]”; the Greek adjective form of the noun translated “low estate” (see on v. 48). In due time God metes out justice to those who have been oppressed.

53. Good things. Probably, both literal and spiritual food. Compare Christ's promise to those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (see on Matt. 5:6).

The rich. As a rule those who had amassed great wealth had done so by oppressing their neighbors, and were consequently classed by the poor as evil men. While in one sense wealth had come to be looked upon as a sign of divine favor—no doubt particularly by those who possessed it—it was identified with wickedness by those who had been oppressed. In contrast, the poor man, who was usually not in a position to oppress anyone, thought himself righteous. This concept of riches and poverty is reflected in Christ's parable of the rich man and Lazarus (ch. 16:19–31).

54. Servant. Gr. *pais*, "child," or "servant." As God's chosen people, Israel was often referred to in OT times as His "servant" (see on Isa. 41:8; see Vol. IV, pp. 26-30).

55. As he spake. A reference to the oft-repeated promises of God (see Gen. 22:17, 18; Deut. 7:12–14; Micah 7:20; etc.). Here, particular reference is made to the help and mercy of God exercised in behalf of His chosen people from generation to generation (Luke 1:54).

His seed. That is, the descendants of Abraham.

56. Mary abode. It is possible that Mary remained with Elisabeth till after the birth of John, though Luke's narrative seems to imply that she left prior to that time. It would seem out of character for Mary to leave at the very time Elisabeth would be most in need of her sympathetic and tender ministry. It is probable that Luke here mentions Mary's departure at this point in order to complete that portion of the narrative dealing with the visit of Mary to Elisabeth. Another instance of this literary device, common throughout both OT and NT, occurs in ch. 3:20, 21, where the imprisonment of John is introduced into the record before the baptism of Jesus, though it actually occurred afterward. The fact that Mary is not mentioned by name in ch. 1:57, 58 in no way implies that she did not participate in the incident here related.

Returned. It is probable that the events of Matt. 1:18–25—the appearance of the angel to Joseph and Joseph's marriage—occurred soon after Mary's return from the home of Elisabeth to Nazareth.

57. Full time. [*Birth of John the Baptist, Luke 1:57–80.* See The Nativity; a Suggestive Chronology of Christ's Birth.] We know nothing of the time of year when John was born. The ancient Alexandrian church is said to have celebrated this event on the 23d of April. In view of the fact that this date is based on a very early tradition, there may be reason to think that it represents at least the approximate time of year when the event occurred. The church in Alexandria later changed the celebration to June 24—a date arbitrarily set so as to be six months from December 25—in order to be in harmony with the practice of the Greek and Latin churches.

With April 23 as the possible date for the birth of John the Baptist, the birth of Jesus would have been about October 19 (see pp. 240-242; see on Matt. 2:1). It should be noted, however, that this computation is based only on an ancient tradition whose value is unknown.

58. Her cousins. That is, her kinsfolk (see on v. 36).

Rejoiced with her. Elisabeth's neighbors were happy with her. Some translations read "congratulated her," which her friends and kinsfolk no doubt did; but Luke's statement here is not so much concerned with congratulations as with a genuine feeling of understanding on the part of the friends of Elisabeth (cf. Luke 15:6, 9; 1 Cor. 12:26).

A genuine sympathetic interest in the joys and sorrows of others is a fundamental Christian virtue. It is, in fact, the basis on which all right relationships with our fellow men rest. Such concern for the well-being of others is the practical result of the operation of the law of God in the heart—of that kind of love that fulfills the law (Matt. 22:39, 40; Rom. 13:10). A man cannot be a follower of the Master unless he is ready and willing to “rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Rom. 12:15). See on Matt. 5:43–48.

59. *The eighth day.* Among the Hebrews it was the custom to administer the rite of circumcision on the eighth day; that is, when the child was seven days old, as we reckon time (Gen. 17:10–14; 21:4; see on ch. 17:10, 11). Circumcision represented the admission of the child to the covenant relationship. Its importance is attested by the positive requirement that it be done (Lev. 12:3). It even took place on the Sabbath (John 7:22, 23; cf. Phil. 3:5). Circumcision marked male Jews as members of the chosen people under the theocracy. God took Abraham and his descendants as a race, and descent from Abraham was considered as automatically making of that person a subject of the theocracy. He had no choice in the matter; he was an Israelite and the Israelites were God’s chosen nation. Abrahamic descent, however, did not ensure salvation, as is evident by repeated declarations of Holy Writ (see Luke 3:8; John 8:33–39; Rom. 2:25–29; 9:4–8; Gal. 3:7, 9, 16, 29); yet no Jew could enter the covenant relationship without compliance with this rite, which God had ordained for Israel.

As circumcision was for literal Israel the sign of their covenant relationship to God, so baptism is for Christians (see Col. 2:10–12; see on Gen. 17:10), the spiritual descendants of Abraham (Gal. 3:7, 9, 27–29). God’s chosen people do not become heirs of the promise on the basis of physical descent, but on the basis of personal faith in the power of Christ to save from the power and penalty of sin (see Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:36, 37).

They called. The Greek may be interpreted as meaning they were going to name him, or they began to name him, after his father. The friends and relatives gathered to rejoice with Zacharias and Elisabeth and to share with them the joy of the occasion. They apparently took the initiative in the events of the day. Some of them, doubtless, were members of the priesthood, and one of these probably administered the rite of circumcision. We can imagine their discussing the matter of a name among themselves and agreeing upon Zacharias. There is OT precedent for friends and relatives participating in the naming of a child (see Ruth 4:17). In proposing to name the child after its father, those gathered in the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth were following a customary procedure, and no doubt felt that no objection would be raised to their thus honoring Zacharias and showing respect for him. The probability that Zacharias was at the time deaf as well as dumb (see on Luke 1:62) seems to have eliminated him from the discussion and decision.

60. *His mother answered.* Apparently Zacharias had informed Elisabeth of the angel’s instructions about the naming of their child (see v. 13). There is no evidence that Elisabeth spoke here by inspiration.

61. *Kindred.* Gr. *suggeneia* (see on v. 36). There was no family precedent for the name John. It was usually the first-born son who perpetuated the name of the father, or, more often, that of the grandfather. This custom not only showed respect for previous generations but also served to identify the person bearing the name with the particular family to which he belonged.

62. Made signs. The tense of the verb in Greek indicates repeated efforts at conversing with Zacharias.

63. A writing table. Gr. *pinakidion*, “a small tablet”; hence “a writing tablet.” The word “table” as here used is an Old English word for “tablet.” If such a writing tablet was not a common piece of equipment in Judean homes, it is probable that Zacharias’ condition had made its use necessary in his home during the period of his affliction (see on v. 62).

Wrote, saying. A typically Hebraistic idiom commonly used to introduce a direct quotation (see 2 Kings 10:6).

John. See on vs. 13, 60. Zacharias wrote, literally, “*John*, is his name.” The matter was not open to further discussion.

They marvelled. Probably not so much because of the choice of a name as that Zacharias concurred with Elisabeth in bestowing this particular name on their son (see on vs. 22, 62). Some commentators, supported by at least one ancient manuscript (Bezae), connect this statement with what follows, namely, the loosing of Zacharias’ tongue (v. 64), rather than with what precedes the statement. However this may be, it is certain that Zacharias began to speak “immediately” after having written the name “John” (v. 64). That very instant his speech was restored, and no doubt his hearing also (see on v. 62). Codex Bezae and the Old Latin manuscripts have the clauses of vs. 63, 64 in a different order: “Immediately his tongue was loosed, and all marvelled, and his mouth was opened.”

64. Loosed. Zacharias’ physical handicap was now removed. This miracle, occurring at the naming of the child, served to confirm the birth of John as a fulfillment of the vision in the Temple nearly a year earlier.

Praised God. It was appropriate that the first words of Zacharias should be words of praise to God. Whereas his last spoken words had expressed doubt (v. 18), his first words, now, were an expression of faith. This would indicate that his months of silence had resulted in great spiritual benefit. With every other voice hushed, and waiting in quietness and humility before God, Zacharias found that “the silence of the soul” had made “more distinct the voice of God” (see DA 363).

65. Fear. Not terror, but profound religious awe and reverence (see on v. 30).

Noised abroad. This implies continuing conversation on the subject among the people.

Hill country. That is, the region round about the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth (see on vs. 23, 39).

66. What manner of child. Or, “What then will this child be?” (RSV).

Hand of the Lord. Here used figuratively of divine providence. In the NT this expression is peculiar to Luke (see Acts 11:21; 13:11), though it occurs commonly in the OT (Judges 2:15; 1 Kings 18:46, etc.). However, other NT writers use the expression “hand of God” (cf. 1 Peter 5:6; Rom. 10:21).

67. Filled with the Holy Ghost. The inspired “song of Zacharias” (vs. 68–79), as it is often called, is sometimes called the Benedictus, “Blessed,” from its first word in the Latin Vulgate of v. 68. The reference in v. 64 to Zacharias’ speaking and praising God probably anticipates these words. The song of Zacharias is priestly in tenor and appropriate to a son of Aaron, as the song of Mary is regal and appropriate to a daughter of David. The phrases suggest that Zacharias had spent the time preceding John’s birth in

diligent study of what the prophets had written of the Messiah and the work of His forerunner.

The entire hymn is definitely Hebrew and Messianic in flavor. It is a song of praise to God, in anticipation of the imminent fulfillment of promises relating to the Messiah and to His kingdom. It is divided into two major sections, the first consisting of three strophes, or stanzas (vs. 68, 69; 70–72; 73–75), primarily concerned with the mission of the Messiah, and the second, of two strophes (vs. 76, 77; 78, 79) concerned with the work of the Messiah's forerunner. The content and phraseology of the hymn denote an intimate acquaintance with the OT Scriptures, particularly the prophets: v. 68 (Ps. 41:13; 72:18; 106:48), v. 69 (1 Sam. 2:10; Ps. 132:17), v. 71 (Ps. 23:5), v. 72 (Ps. 105:8; 106:45), v. 73 (Ex. 2:24; Ps. 105:9; Jer. 11:5; Micah 7:20), v. 76 (Mal. 3:1; cf. Isa. 40:3), v. 79 (Isa. 42:7; Ps. 107:10; cf. Isa. 9:1, 2). In addition to these more or less direct references there are many allusions to the OT.

68. Lord God of Israel. The covenant title of God, the use of which implies a recognition of, and earnest desire for, the fulfillment of all the promises included in the covenant.

Hath visited. Gr. *episkeptomai*, “to inspect,” “to examine,” in the sense of looking into a matter with a view to giving assistance. In Matt. 25:36 the same word is used of visiting a person in prison, not so much in the sense of making a social call on him as of endeavoring to succor him. Here, Zacharias envisions the fulfillment of the Messianic promises made to “his people” from generation to generation. This was particularly significant in view of the fact that now, for about four centuries, the voices of the canonical prophets had ceased. The majority of the people were doubtless saying in their hearts: “The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth” (Eze. 12:22). God now “visits” His people, not in judgment, but in mercy, to deliver them and to redeem them.

Redeemed his people. These words constitute an implied announcement that the Redeemer Himself would soon appear, “to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). As is so often the case throughout the prophets of the OT, Zacharias here speaks of a future event as if it were already accomplished (see Vol. I, pp. 27, 28). God's promises are so sure that even then Zacharias could rightfully speak of the plan of redemption as an accomplished fact.

Israel was not only a company of individuals in need of salvation from sin (Luke 1:68, 77), but also a nation, a “chosen people” in need of deliverance from their enemies (v. 71). In past generations God had often delivered the Israelites from their national enemies, such as Egypt, Midian, Philistia, Assyria, and Babylon. Indeed, the establishment of the Messianic kingdom as set forth by the prophet Daniel (Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 18; 12:1) envisioned deliverance, complete and permanent, from all enemies. But in the plan of God deliverance from sin must precede deliverance from the nations round about. However, national pride led the Jews to think of salvation almost exclusively in terms of deliverance from external enemies and to forget the necessity of deliverance from unseen enemies within. The popular concept of the Messiah as a political savior was not altogether a matter of error; it was in part a case of misplaced emphasis (see DA 30, 235), for the OT is filled with predictions of Messianic glories. The Jews forgot that without deliverance from personal sin there could never be deliverance from national enemies. They focused on the *rewards* of rightdoing to the extent that they neglected to *do* right. See Vol. IV, pp. 26-33.

69. An horn. A common OT metaphor for strength and power (see 1 Sam. 2:10; see on 2 Sam. 22:3), based on the fact that the fighting strength of horned animals, such as bulls and rams, is in their horns. Also this expression may possibly be a reference to the helmets of warriors, which were often adorned with horns. Thus a “horn” came to represent such things as personal success (Ps. 92:9, 10), the power of nations (see on Dan. 8:21), and even divine strength—“the horn of my salvation” (Ps. 18:2). Here (Luke 1:69), the “horn” refers to the Messiah Himself.

The house. That is, the dynastic family. As promised, the Messiah was to be a descendant of David (see on Matt. 1:1).

Servant. Gr. *pais*, “child,” or “servant” (see on v. 54).

70. His holy prophets. The prophets of old all bore witness to Christ (see Luke 24:25, 27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 3:21), and “enquired and searched diligently” to understand what “the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify” (1 Peter 1:10, 11).

Since the world began. That is, “from of old,” or, “anciently.” This expression is characteristic of Luke (see Acts 3:21; 15:18). The first prophecy of a Redeemer was made in the Garden of Eden at the time man sinned (see Gen. 3:15). Enoch pointed men of his generation forward to the Messiah (Jude 14, 15), and to each succeeding generation God sent inspired witnesses to testify of the certainty of salvation. One and all, they bore witness to Christ (see Acts 3:21; 1 Peter 1:10–12).

71. Saved from our enemies. As a result of transgression Israel had served one foreign people after another—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and now Rome. The galling yoke of bondage to Rome weighed heavily upon them. To be sure, deliverance from enemy nations was necessary before the establishment of the eternal Messianic kingdom (see on v. 74). In fact, the work of the Messiah would culminate in the establishment of His kingdom (see Dan. 2:44; 12:1; Matt. 25:31–34; Vol. IV, pp. 29, 30). In the meantime the “kingdom of God” was to be established within their hearts (see Luke 17:20, 21). First, there must be deliverance from the power of sin (see Matt. 1:21), and this in turn would make possible their deliverance from the wages of sin, death (see John 3:16; Rom. 6:23). Only then would human beings be able to enjoy the eternal kingdom Christ came to establish. See on Matt. 4:17; 5:2; see Vol. IV, pp. 29, 30.

72. Mercy. God’s mercy, in a certain sense, “kept secret since the world began,” was now to be “made manifest” (Rom. 16:25, 26). For countless generations those who sat “in darkness and in the shadow of death,” had waited for the incarnate Mercy of God to guide their “feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:79).

His holy covenant. The “everlasting covenant,” as revealed to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, to Noah after the Flood, to Abraham and his seed, and to the faithful of all ages (see Gen. 9:16; 17:19; Lev. 24:8; Heb. 13:20). Here primary reference is made to the covenant as delivered to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 15:18; 17:4–7).

73. The oath. The “oath” here referred to was that given by God in confirmation of His covenant with Abraham (see Gen. 22:16–18; Heb. 6:13–18). It is one of the two “immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie” (Heb. 6:18), the other being the promise which the “oath” confirms. In giving Abraham “an oath for confirmation” God employed a human custom in order to assure Abraham of the certainty of His promise. The everlasting covenant, the plan of salvation, gives us today “a strong consolation” and is “as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast” (Heb. 6:18, 19).

74. Serve him without fear. The context refers this “fear” primarily to fear of “our enemies,” that is, the tyranny of heathen conquerors whose cruel and arbitrary exercise of power was so often a hindrance to the worship and service of God. At the birth of John and of Jesus, Caesar and Herod were the chief “enemies” of the Jewish people (see on Luke 1:5; Matt. 2:1). It is probable also that Zacharias refers, as well, to the haunting “fear” that fills the hearts and pervades the lives of those who do not know “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Phil. 4:7). This is fear of the mysterious, unknown forces that control the destinies of men’s lives, and fear of the great judgment day.

75. In holiness and righteousness. See Eph. 4:24. These two terms may be considered inclusive of “the whole duty of man” (see Eccl. 12:13), of all that God requires of him (see Micah 6:8).

All the days. Those who serve God “in holiness and righteousness” may be confident of the future. Irrespective of the uncertainties and vicissitudes of life, they may enjoy peace and security of mind and heart. In the midst of strife and turmoil they live, as it were, in the very presence of God and breathe the pure, invigorating atmosphere of heaven.

76. Prophet of the Highest. Here begins the major section of the hymn of Zacharias. From the graciousness of the Lord, in the first section, Zacharias’ thoughts turn particularly to his newborn son, John, who was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, the promised messenger of the Lord. Jesus is appropriately called the “Son of the Highest” (v. 32), and John, the “prophet of the Highest.” Christ testified that John was “more than a prophet” (Matt. 11:9); indeed, he was, in a sense, the greatest of all prophets (see on Luke 1:15, 17).

Before the face of the Lord. The specific predictions of Isaiah (ch. 40:3) and of Malachi (ch. 3:1) were later claimed by John as applying to himself (see John 1:23; cf. Matt. 11:10; Luke 3:4). “The Lord” is evidently the Messiah, and Christ is therefore identified, in this instance at least, with Jehovah (Lord; see Vol. I, p. 172) of the OT (Isa. 40:3).

Prepare his ways. This was the task of John the Baptist. He was to prepare the hearts and minds of the people for the Messiah, by fostering interest in the prophecies concerning Him, by affirming that the time had come for the fulfillment of these prophecies, and by calling for “repentance,” through which men might qualify for citizenship in the kingdom of the Messiah.

77. Knowledge of salvation. It is in the very nature of things that knowledge must precede belief, for “how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?” (Rom. 10:14). Faith in Jesus requires an intelligent understanding of the fundamental facts and principles of the plan of salvation. In order to *believe*, a man must have *something* to believe, and the grand objective of John’s ministry was to lay a firm foundation for belief that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the promised Messiah, “the Lamb of God,” “the Son of God” (John 1:36, 34). It is the Messiah who brings “remission” of “sins” (see Matt. 1:21; 26:28); it was His forerunner who brought a knowledge of sin. Luke here makes it evident that the “salvation” whereof he speaks is personal salvation of the individual rather than political salvation of the nation. It is for a lack of saving knowledge that men are “destroyed”—not for not having heard it, but for rejecting it (see Hosea 4:6).

78. Tender mercy. Literally, “bowels of mercy” (see Phil. 2:1; Col. 3:12). The Greeks considered the “bowels,” meaning the abdomen, to be the seat of the emotions—of anger, anxiety, pity, and love.

Dayspring. Gr. *anatolē*, “a rising [of the sun or stars],” or “east,” that is, the place of the sunrise. The term is commonly used in the NT in the latter sense (see Matt. 2:1; 8:11; 24:27; Rev. 7:2; 16:12; etc.). Among the ancient peoples of the East, as with Orientals today, the east is the cardinal point of the compass, the position of honor and respect.

Some commentators have referred the word *anatolē*, “a rising,” to the “Branch” that was to “grow out of” the “roots” of David (see Isa. 11:1–4; Jer. 23:5). It is true that the word *anatolē* may be so used; in fact, it is used in this sense in the LXX (Jer. 23:5).

However, the context of Luke 1:78, 79 makes clear that Zacharias here refers to the sunrise rather than to the growth of a plant. Compare the translation: “The day shall dawn upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death” (vs. 78, 79, RSV). Malachi speaks of Christ as “the Sun of righteousness” (Mal. 4:2; see DA 22, 463, 464).

Hath visited. Important textual evidence (cf. p. 146) may be cited for reading “shall visit” (see on v. 68).

79. Light. The language of this verse is clearly based on the Messianic prophecy of Isa. 9:2. Light has ever been a symbol of the divine presence (DA 464), of Him who dwells “in the light which no man can approach unto” (1 Tim. 6:16; see on Gen. 3:24; Luke 1:78). Jesus said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12; see ch. 12:36). Our Saviour is “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). Matthew applies the words of Isa. 9:1, 2 to Christ (ch. 4:14–16). The joy of salvation belongs to those who “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7), for their path is then “as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4:18). See on John 1:4–9.

Sit in darkness. Those who figuratively sit in darkness evidently do so because they cannot see where to walk. They need the “light” to guide their feet “into the way of peace.” Men sat, as it were, unsolaced, with longing eyes looking for the coming of the Light of life, whose coming would dispel the darkness and make plain the mystery of the future (see DA 32). For 4,000 years earth’s skies had been dark with the ominous clouds of sin and death, and now for centuries no prophetic star had appeared through the gloom to guide the wayfarers of earth across the deserts of time in their search for the Prince of Peace (see DA 31). We too will find ourselves sitting unsolaced, with life empty and incomplete, unless the Day-star arises in our hearts and sheds abroad within our lives the light of eternal day (see 2 Peter 1:19).

Shadow of death. See on Ps. 23:4. The sentence of death is imposed upon all men as a result of sin (see Rom. 6:23). But “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22). “The redeemed of the Lord . . . , whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy,” “wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way” and sat “in darkness and in the shadow of death” until the Saviour “brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death” and “led them forth by the right way” (Ps. 107:2, 4, 10, 14, 7).

Guide our feet. Zacharias included himself with those whose feet the Messiah would “guide . . . into the way of peace.”

Way of peace. That is, the way of salvation, the way by which those whom sin has made enemies of God may once more be at peace with Him (Rom. 5:1, 10; 2 Cor. 5:18; Eph. 2:16). Christ, the Prince of Peace, accomplished this by making “reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17). “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). “Great peace have they which love thy law” (Ps. 119:165). Christ came that He might give peace to us such as the world knows not and cannot offer (John 14:27). This “peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep” our “hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). When Christ enters the heart it is always with the words, “Peace be unto you” (Luke 24:36). Thus, appropriately, ends the song of Zacharias. See on John 14:27.

80. The child grew. Primarily a reference to physical growth (cf. ch. 2:40, 52). A similar statement was made concerning the child Samuel (see 1 Sam. 2:26).

Waxed strong in spirit. That is, in intellect and moral perception (see 1 Sam. 2:26; Luke 2:40, 52). The symmetrical development of physical, mental, and moral strength is well illustrated in the life of John, for his parents brought him “up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Similarly, it is our privilege today so to live in communion with God that “we too may expect the divine Spirit to mold our little ones, even from their earliest moments” (DA 512). See on Luke 1:15, 24; 2:52.

Deserts. The “deserts” in which John spent most of his time “till the day of his shewing” are commonly spoken of as the “wilderness of Judaea” (see Matt. 3:1; etc.). This semiarid, wild, rugged, and unsettled region lies between the Dead Sea and the crest of the mountainous highlands of southern Palestine, and constitutes the eastern slopes of the range. Probably this was the region where Christ later fasted 40 days and meditated on His life mission. The Wilderness of Judah was in close proximity to Hebron, the possible home of Zacharias and Elisabeth (see on Luke 1:23, 39). Although some of the Essenes, a strict, ascetic sect of Judaism, maintained secluded colonies in this wilderness area, there is no historical evidence for the view that John became an Essene (see on Matt. 3:4). The home of the prophet Amos had been in the vicinity of Tekoa, a small town situated near the borders of this wilderness area (see on Amos 1:1).

In later years John made his own the Nazirite vow taken by his parents on his behalf at his birth (DA 102). It seems likely that his parents, who were already advanced in age at the time of his birth (see on v. 7), died when John was still a youth. It would appear, also, that he took up his abode in the desert solitudes not long thereafter. Solitude was for John a better schoolmaster than the best rabbi Jerusalem could offer, and the desert a better-equipped schoolroom than the Palace of Herod or the Temple courts. The rabbinical schools would have unfitted John for his task (DA 101). As only the still waters can mirror the stars, so only a heart untroubled by the ripples and eddies of this world can reflect perfectly the light of the “Star” that came “out of Jacob” (Num. 24:17). John chose as his abode a place where every other voice but that of God was hushed, and where he might in quietness wait before the Lord. It was there, in the solitude of the desert, that the silence of his soul made more distinct the voice of God (see DA 363). There he led a comparatively secluded life until the time came for him to take up his public ministry.

As the wilderness was God’s great classroom for training such leaders as Moses, Amos, and John the Baptist, so the wilderness experiences of life can provide favored opportunities for attuning the soul to Heaven. The equanimity of soul that comes with

insight into things invisible is the preparation needed by those whom God chooses today to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus. Modern life is not conducive to meditation on the will and ways of God, as revealed in His Word and in His providential dealings with us. Unless we find time to escape from the din of the world and shut ourselves in with God, quietly waiting before Him, we may never hear His “still small voice” speaking to our souls (DA 363; cf. 1 Kings 19:12). It should be our purpose to spend less and less time with the things of earth and to devote more and more time to walking with God as did Enoch of old. Like John, we need to set our affection on “things above, not on things on the earth” (see Col. 3:2).

Shewing. Gr. *anadeixis*, “a pointing out,” or “a public showing forth.” *Anadeixis* is often used by the classical writers in speaking of the inauguration of those appointed to public office, and also of the dedication of temples. Luke uses the related verb, *anadeiknumi*, in reference to the appointment of the Seventy (ch. 10:1). John was of priestly descent, and as stipulated by the law of Moses, a priest was to take up his ministry at about the age of 30 (see on Num. 4:3). It is probable that the “shewing” of John came when he was about 30, as with Jesus when He commenced His ministry (see on Luke 3:23).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5–23DA 97–99
 6, 8, 9, 11 DA 97
 13 DA 231
 13–15Te 292
 13–19DA 98
 14, 15 CD 225; MH 379
 15 DA 100, 149, 219; ML 329; Te 91, 269; 3T 62
 15–17CT 445; FE 447
 17 DA 101; EW 155, 259; 3T 61; 6T 233
 20 DA 99; EW 24
 22, 23 DA 99
 32, 33 DA 81; GC 416; PP 755
 35 DA 24
 38 DA 98
 46, 47 7T 87
 53 DA 268; MH 75
 57–80DA 99–103
 64–66DA 99
 65 DA 97
 67 DA 100
 72–74DA 103
 76 DA 97
 76–79DA 100
 76–80CT 445; FE 448
 78, 79 MH 423
 79 9T 60, 64
 80 DA 100, 101; 8T 221, 331

CHAPTER 2

1 *Augustus taxeth all the Roman empire.* 6 *The nativity of Christ.* 8 *One angel relateth it to the shepherds:* 13 *many sing praises to God for it.* 21 *Christ is circumcised.* 22 *Mary purified.* 28 *Simeon and Anna prophesy of Christ:* 40 *who increaseth in wisdom,* 46 *questioneth in the temple with the doctors,* 51 *and is obedient to his parents.*

1. In those days. [*Birth of Jesus, Luke 2:1–7.* See The Nativity; a Synopsis of the Life of Christ, a Suggestive Chronology of Christ’s Birth, The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2, The Reigns of the Herods, The Duration of Christ’s Ministry, the Opening of the Galilean Ministry, The Ministry of Our Lord, Crucifixion In Relation To Passover, Passion Week and Resurrection to Ascension, and Palestine Under the Herodians.] That is, soon after the birth of John the Baptist. Jesus was born about six months after John (see ch. 1:26, 56, 57).

A decree. This “decree” originated in imperial Rome (DA 44). In view of the fact that no secular historian of the time mentions this decree, critical scholarship long assumed that Luke must have been mistaken. More recently, however, papyri and inscriptions have brought support for Luke’s narrative on every essential fact stated in vs. 1–3. From Augustus’ official records (*Res Gestae Divi Augusti* i. 8) it is known that Augustus made at least three general surveys of the Roman Empire during his reign, in 28 B.C., 8 B.C., and A.D. 14. None of the three seems to coincide with the one to which Luke refers, but it is entirely possible that the tense political situation in Palestine and the bitter Jewish resistance to Roman taxation delayed the execution of the royal edict in this part of the empire. In fact, there were similar surveys, or censuses, in other parts of the empire that were not held at the times stated above, as for example, the census of 12 B.C. in Gaul. It is worthy of note that neither pagan nor Jewish critics, like Celsus and Porphyry, challenged Luke’s accuracy on this point. Even by those who do not accept Luke as an inspired writer he is recognized as an able and trustworthy historian (see on ch. 1:1–4). It is not likely that so careful a writer would carelessly lay himself open to criticism by misrepresenting well-known contemporary facts. See pp. 241, 242; a Synopsis of the Life of Christ, a Suggestive Chronology of Christ’s Birth, The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2, Palestine Under the Herodians.

Cæsar Augustus. Emperor of Rome from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14 (see pp. 37, 38, 238; The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2, The Reigns of the Herods, and Palestine Under the Herodians). Augustus (a title; named Octavian), grandnephew of Julius Caesar, who had been assassinated in 44 B.C. A decree issued under his authority would appear to have his sanction even if not issued by him personally.

World. Gr. *oikoumenē*, the “inhabited world,” here probably, more properly, the “civilized world,” as distinct from the barbarian or non-Roman world. Various Roman writers such as Polybius and Plutarch use *oikoumenē* in this sense.

Taxed. Gr. *apographō*, “to write off,” “to copy,” “to register,” or “to enroll” (see DA 44, where the word “enrollment” is used). *Apographō* is not properly used of a tax levy,

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Lk 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

but of what we would call today a census. In ancient times, however, a census usually included the registration of property as well as of names and was commonly made as the basis for the levy of a property tax. The term might thus imply, though it does not explicitly denote, taxation.

2. First. Gr. *prōtos*, sometimes used where the Gr. *proteros*, “earlier,” might be expected (see John 1:15, 30; 15:18; 1 John 4:19; etc.). It is possible, though grammatically somewhat difficult, that *prōtos* is used in this sense here. Luke uses the adverbial form *prōton* to indicate that one thing happened “first” in the sense of being “before,” or prior to, another (see chs. 6:42; 9:59; 21:9; etc.).

However this may be, no longer is it possible to doubt that Luke is correct in stating that an enrollment, or taxing, of the whole Roman Empire took place under Augustus. Thus Luke stands vindicated as an accurate historian. In commenting on v. 2 the *International Critical Commentary* observes, “The accuracy of Lk. is such that we ought to require very strong evidence before rejecting any statement of his as an unquestionable blunder.”

Cyrenius. Sentius Saturninus was governor of the Roman province of Syria from 9 to 6 B.C., and was followed by Quintilius Varus, who continued in office until some time after the death of Herod in April, 4 B.C. Cyrenius (Quirinius) held that office in A.D. 6 (Josephus *Antiquities* xviii. 1. 1), although how long prior to that he had served in Syria is not known. See p. 241.

3. Every one into his own city. Among the Romans it would probably have been sufficient for every man to register in the city where he might be resident at the time, rather than in the city of his ancestral home. It is known that the usual Roman “enrollment” by cities was not always followed in the provinces. For example, the Gauls were “enrolled” by tribes. An extant decree authorizing a Roman census in Egypt required people to register at their place of origin (see bibliography entry for Caird, p. 265). In view of the fact that tribal genealogy meant so much to the Jews, it may well have been that Herod the Great decided on “enrollment” by tribes as the best procedure for his realm. At any rate, the mention of this point is indirect testimony pointing to Herod as the one through whom the Roman decree was executed in Judea, and also vindicating the reliability of Luke’s account.

4. Joseph also went. Inspiration is silent as to whether Joseph and Mary were conscious of the fact that prophecy pointed to Bethlehem as the place where the Messiah was to be born (see on v. 5). Luke simply points to compliance with the decree of Augustus as providing the motive for the trip.

City of David. So called because this city was David’s ancestral home (see 1 Sam. 17:12, 58), and he its most illustrious citizen.

Bethlehem. See on Gen. 35:19; Matt. 2:1. The town is 5 mi. (8 km.) south of Jerusalem, and is, like Nazareth, now inhabited predominantly by Arab Christians. Its modern name is *Beit Lahm*.

The house and lineage. Though here the statement applies exclusively to Joseph, it is clear that Mary also was of the “house and lineage” of David (see on Matt. 1:16, 18; Luke 1:27; cf. DA 44).

5. With Mary. The motive that led Mary to accompany Joseph is not stated. Neither Roman nor Jewish law required her to go. According to Roman law women were to pay

the poll tax, but need not appear in person. It may be that Mary, knowing that the birth of her child was at hand, knew also that prophecy pointed to Bethlehem as his birthplace (Micah 5:2), and intentionally accompanied Joseph. They may have purposed to settle in Bethlehem (see DA 66). Again, it may be that her going was dictated by the Holy Spirit. The fact that they could not find a lodging place in Bethlehem may imply that they owned no property there. In Luke 2:39 Nazareth is called “their own city.” In Bethlehem, then, both were strangers, “homeless,” “unrecognized and unhonored” (DA 44).

Wife. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for omitting this word. Mary probably would not have traveled with Joseph unless they had been married. Matthew implies that Joseph married Mary immediately after the angel instructed him to do so (ch. 1:24), and thus before the journey to Bethlehem (see on ch. 2:1).

6. Days were accomplished. That is, according to the promise of the angel to Mary (ch. 1:31). This was about six months after the birth of John the Baptist (ch. 1:36, 39, 56, 57; see on ch. 1:39). The exact year and season of Christ’s birth are not known. Concerning the year see pp. 240-242, and for the time of year see on chs. 1:57; 2:8.

7. Firstborn. Gr. *prōtotokos* (see on Matt. 1:18, 25; cf. on Luke 1:35). There is no direct evidence as to whether Mary gave birth to other children subsequent to the birth of Jesus (see on Matt. 1:25), although the fact that Jesus, on the cross, gave His mother into the care of John makes it seem improbable that she had other children living at the time (see on John 19:26).

Swaddling clothes. Rather, a “swathing band.” Hebrew children, at birth, were washed in water, rubbed in salt, and wrapped in “swaddling clothes” (see on Eze. 16:4). These were strips of cloth wound loosely about the body and limbs of the infant. According to the usual custom, the baby was laid diagonally on a square piece of cloth, two corners being folded over its body, one over its feet, and the other underneath its head. This was held in place by hands loosely wound around the outside.

A manger. No place more humble could have been found in which to lay the infant Jesus; no man can say that he had a less auspicious start in life. Poor in the riches of this world (see on v. 24), Joseph and Mary were nevertheless rich in faith. A tradition that originated some centuries later makes the place of the nativity a cave in the vicinity of Bethlehem. The place, however, was “a rude building” where beasts were “sheltered” (DA 44). The ox and the ass usually introduced by artists into pictures of the nativity are thought to have been suggested by Isa. 1:3.

No room. Simply for the reason that the inn was already filled with guests. No thought of inhospitableness on the part of the innkeeper is implied. It is probable that a vast majority of the Jewish residents of Palestine at this time were descendants of Judah, Benjamin, or Levi. Hence accommodations throughout Judea were, no doubt, taxed to the limit.

Inn. Gr. *kataluma*, “a lodging place,” or “an inn.” Probably here a small Oriental khan or caravansary, which usually consisted of rooms facing on a covered porch surrounding a central courtyard. The travelers would either be in one of the rooms or occupy a few square feet assigned them on the floor of the covered porch. The animals and baggage of travelers might be kept in the courtyard.

8. Shepherds. [*The Announcement to the Shepherds, Luke 2:8–20. See The Nativity.*] These simple but devout men spent the silent hours of the night talking together of the promised Messiah and praying for His coming (see DA 47). They were apparently among

that small but faithful number who waited “for the consolation of Israel” (v. 25) and “looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38; see on Matt. 1:18; Luke 2:25, 26, 38). It is ever to such persons that Heaven imparts light and truth.

Only those who “hunger and thirst after righteousness” may expect to be “filled” (Matt. 5:6). Only those who seek for light and truth will find it (see Matt. 7:7; Heb. 9:28). It matters not how humble our station in life, the all-important thing is to cherish in our hearts “that blessed hope” (Titus 2:13).

The leaders of Israel, untrue to their trust, were passed by in favor of a group of humble and devout shepherds. Even when the priests and rabbis in Jerusalem heard the report of the visit of the angels to the shepherds they refused to believe. Unlike the shepherds, they would not go to Bethlehem to investigate, and branded the report an idle tale (see DA 63).

Abiding. If the ordinary custom was followed, the shepherds were living in the fields both day and night. This clearly implies that the season was after the rains of April, and before the rains of November (see Vol. II, pp. 108, 110), the season when sheep were commonly kept in the open fields. Winters are cold and wet in the mountain regions of Judea, and if it had been winter, the shepherds would have sought shelter from the heavy winter rains for themselves and their flocks. Considering all the evidence regarding the time of Christ’s birth, it seems that placing the birth in the autumn of the year would fit best the chronological pattern of the context. This does not, however, rule out the possibility that the birth occurred at some other season. See on ch. 1:57.

It was not until the 4th century of the Christian Era that December 25 came to be observed as the birthday of the Christ. According to the Julian calendar, this was the date of the winter solstice, when the sun turned northward. In heathen lands this season was marked by festive celebrations, known among the Romans as the Saturnalia, held in honor of the rebirth of various solar deities. It was in the Western church that the birth of Christ was first associated with this pagan holiday.

Keeping watch. Literally, “watching watches,” the plural probably indicating that the shepherds took turns. These fields were the very ones where David had tended his father’s flocks (see DA 47). In the vicinity of Bethlehem was “the tower of Edar,” literally, “the tower of the flock” (see on Gen. 35:21; cf. Micah 4:8). According to tradition, it was here that flocks destined for sacrifice at the Temple in Jerusalem were gathered. It may be that the shepherds to whom the angels appeared were “keeping watch” over flocks already set apart for this purpose.

9. The angel. Rather, “an angel.” This important mission could most appropriately be entrusted to the leader of the angelic host, Gabriel (see DA 780; see on ch. 1:19).

Came upon them. Perhaps the angel was at a slight elevation in the air above the shepherds. It is possible that the shepherds’ first intimation of his coming was his appearance immediately before them.

Glory. Gr. *doxa*, here, primarily “splendor,” perhaps comparable with that later manifested on the mount of transfiguration (ch. 9:31, 32). See on Rom. 3:23.

They were sore afraid. That is, “they feared greatly,” as might be considered only natural on an occasion when the veil between men and the invisible world is parted. In OT times people to whom angels appeared, sometimes thought of the angel as a harbinger of death (Judges 6:22, 13:21, 22). This angel came to announce deliverance and joy (see Luke 2:10).

10. Fear not. See on ch. 1:13.

Bring ... good tidings. Gr. *euaggelizō*, “to proclaim good news,” or “to announce glad tidings.” Our words “evangelist,” “evangelize,” and “evangelism” are derived from this Greek word. It is in this sense that the gospel writers are “evangelists.” From its very inception Christianity has announced “good tidings” or “good news,” the “good news” or “gospel” of redeeming love, of salvation.

To all people. According to the apostolic commission, the disciples were to “teach all nations” the gospel of salvation (Matt. 28:19).

11. City of David. See on v. 4. Christ was born at the right time (see Gal. 4:4) and at the right place (see on Micah 5:2).

Saviour. Gr. *Sōtēr*, a title containing the same idea as the personal name “Jesus” (see on Matt. 1:1, 21).

Christ the Lord. Clothed no longer with the glory of heaven, but in “swaddling clothes” (vs. 7, 12), the child of Mary was nonetheless “Christ the Lord” (cf. Heb. 1:6). The title identifies Christ with “the Lord” of OT times (see PP 366; DA 52; see on Luke 1:76), and would be equivalent to the expression Messiah Jehovah (see on Matt. 1:1; see Vol. I, p. 172).

12. A sign. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “the sign.” As used in the Scriptures, a “sign” is not necessarily miraculous (see on Isa. 7:14). The “sign” given to the shepherds was a means of identification. The appearance of the Babe of Bethlehem would be the opposite of what the shepherds were expecting, in view of their exalted ideas concerning the Messiah.

Swaddling clothes. See on v. 7.

13. Suddenly. An innumerable throng of angels had gathered above the hills of Bethlehem, awaiting the angelic announcement of the birth of the Saviour.

Host. Gr. *stratia*, “army,” “host,” or “band,” a common military term, here referring to the ranks of the angelic host (see on Ps. 24:10; Joshua 5:14).

14. Glory to God. The plan of salvation originated with God, and it is fitting that both angels and men should ascribe glory and praise to Him. In this song of the angels “glory” is poetically balanced with “peace,” “God” with “men,” and “highest” with “earth.” The plan of salvation reconciles God and men, so bringing peace to men and glory to God. Peace can come only when God’s will is “done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).

Peace, good will toward men. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “peace among men of good will,” that is, men who are well-disposed toward God and their fellow men (see on Micah 6:8; Matt. 22:36–40). According to the manuscripts on which the KJV is based, the reference is to the *expressed* “good will” of God toward men; according to the others it is to the *effective* “good will” of God operating in men.

Christ is the “good will” of God incarnate. He is the “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6), the One who proclaimed, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). As the result of His coming it is our privilege to “have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). “He is our peace” (Eph. 2:14). It is the “peace of God,” which keeps our “hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7).

15. It came to pass. See on ch. 1:8.

Let us now go. There was no doubt left in the minds of the shepherds as to the truth of the message of Gabriel. They acted at once. Contrast their belief with the hesitancy of Zacharias (see on ch. 1:18, 20).

16. With haste. The shepherds could not be content until they had seen for themselves the promised “sign” confirming the words of the angel.

17. Made known abroad. It was no more possible for the shepherds to hide the light that had been shed abroad in their hearts than for the sun to cease to shine. The good news was too good to be kept to themselves. Eventually, the report of the angel’s visit to the shepherds reached the ears of the priests, elders, and rabbis in Jerusalem—but they treated it as unworthy of notice (DA 62). These leaders felt that surely God could not have passed them by, the religious teachers of the nation, in favor of an uncouth band of despised shepherds (see on Matt. 2:4)! All who find Christ born anew in their hearts today will, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, make the good news known to others.

19 Kept. The force of the Greek denotes that Mary kept on keeping these things in her heart; that is, she kept these incidents vividly in her memory. However, unlike the shepherds, she did not go about telling all she met of the marvelous things that had happened.

Pondered them. Literally, “brought them together.” Mary meditated upon the various incidents connected with Christ’s birth, comparing each with the others the better to understand the import of all. She not only remembered vividly the words of Gabriel to her but compared them with the report of the shepherds.

21. Eight days. [*The Circumcision*, Luke 2:21.] That is, on the eighth day, including the day of birth (see on ch. 1:59).

Circumcising. To Abraham “the sign of circumcision” was “a seal” of the “righteousness” which was his by “faith” (Rom. 4:11). Circumcision represented admission to the privileges and responsibilities of the covenant relationship; it was a pledge of obedience. Now Christ, the Author of the covenant and of its visible sign, the rite of circumcision (PP 373, 396), undergoes the rite and thus comes under the terms of the covenant represented by it. He was born “under the law” (Gal. 4:4) and submitted to its requirements.

Called Jesus. See on Matt. 1:1. Male children were named at the time of circumcision (see Luke 1:59–66). The angel Gabriel had informed both Mary and Joseph that the child’s name should be Jesus (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31).

22. Her purification. [*Presentation at the Temple*, Luke 2:22–38. See *Childhood and Youth of Jesus*.] Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “their purification.” The word “their” could refer to Jesus and Mary, or to Joseph and Mary. If the word “their” includes Jesus, it is probably in the sense that His dedication in the Temple was closely associated with her purification. If it includes Joseph, it is probably in the sense that, as head of the household, he was responsible for Mary’s fulfillment of the ritual requirements involved. It seems most natural to have the pronouns “their” and “they” (including Joseph) refer to the same persons. The Levitical code stipulated that the time of the mother’s “uncleanness” for a male child was 40 days, for a female child, 80 days (see on Lev. 12). During this time she was to remain at home, and was not to participate in public religious exercises. It was the mother, not the child, who stood in need of “purifying.” Both mother and child were to appear at the Temple, for the “purification” of the one and the presentation of the other. It was therefore a two-fold purpose that led

Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to Jerusalem upon this occasion, a distance of about 5 mi. This visit evidently occurred before the visit of the Magi, because thereafter Joseph and Mary would hardly have dared to visit Jerusalem. Furthermore, they left Bethlehem for Egypt almost immediately after the visit of the Magi (see Matt. 2:12–15).

According to the law. Being born “under the law” (Gal. 4:4), Christ obeyed the laws He Himself had given to Moses 1,500 years earlier (PP 366, 373; see on Luke 2:21). As man’s substitute, it was necessary that Christ should “conform to the law in every particular” (DA 50). It is interesting to note that the word “law” appears five times in this chapter (vs. 22, 23, 24, 27, 39), and only four times in the rest of the book of Luke.

To present him. Every first-born male child was to be consecrated to the Lord. This was done in acknowledgment of God’s promise to give His First-born to redeem man and in remembrance of and gratitude for the deliverance of the first-born at the time of the Exodus (see on Ex. 13:2, 12; Num 3:12, 13). The first-born was to be redeemed, or bought back, by a money payment, the amount stipulated being 5 shekels (Num. 18:15, 16). This amount represented approximately 20 Roman denarii, or the equivalent of 20 days’ wages of a laboring man (see p. 49).

23. As it is written. See Ex. 13:2, 12, 15.

Every male. See on v. 22.

24. A sacrifice. For Mary’s “purification” (see on v. 22).

Turtledoves. A species of pigeon. Had Joseph and Mary been in more prosperous circumstances, they would have brought a lamb for a burnt offering (see Lev. 12:6). Instead, they brought the offering of the poor, one bird being for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering (see Lev. 12:8; see on Lev. 1:14; 5:7).

25. Simeon. A tradition that identifies this aged saint with Rabbi Simeon, son of Hillel and father of Gamaliel, is groundless. Rabbi Simeon became president of the Sanhedrin in A.D. 13, some 17 or 18 years after the birth of Jesus. But the Simeon of Luke 2 was obviously already aged (vs. 26, 29), as implied by the fact that he was given the assurance that he would live to see the Messiah.

Just and devout. Simeon was “devout,” or pious at heart, in respect to his duties toward God, and “just” in his conduct toward his fellow men (see on Micah 6:8; Matt. 22:36–40).

Waiting. Simeon apparently belonged to the group of humble and devout searchers of the Scriptures, such as Zacharias and Elizabeth (ch. 1:6, 67), Joseph (Matt. 1:19), Mary (Luke 1:28), the shepherds (DA 47), Anna (Luke 2:37), the wise men (Matt. 2:11; DA 59), Joseph of Arimathaea (Mark 15:43), and a few others (2:38). It was to these faithful ones who were looking for the Messiah that Heaven made known the appearance of the Messiah (cf. Heb. 9:28). It is our privilege today to look for “that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

The consolation of Israel. This expression was part of a common Jewish prayer formula: “May I see the consolation of Israel,” meaning, “May I live to see the Messiah.” The expression “consolation of Israel” reflects various OT Messianic prophecies that speak of the “comfort” of the Messianic hope (see Isa. 12:1; 40:1; 49:13; 51:3; 61:2; 66:13; etc.).

26. Not see death. In every age the devout have treasured the hope of living to see the fulfillment of the Messianic hope. God has purposed that this hope shall ever burn brightly in the hearts of His faithful ones, for more than anything else this hope leads men

to sanctify their lives (see 1 John 3:2, 3). However the devout in Simeon's day had the assurance from the prophecies that their generation would see the Messiah.

The Lord's Christ. Or, "the Lord's Anointed" (see on Matt. 1:1), a pre-Christian Jewish title for the Messiah.

27. Came by the Spirit. Being "just and devout" (v. 25), Simeon had walked in the light with which Heaven had thus far illuminated his pathway, and his eyes were open to further light. How different it was with the priest who momentarily held the infant Jesus in his arms (see DA 52)! Like so many of his fellow priests, he had so many of his fellow priests, he had studied the Scriptures in vain (see DA 30), primarily because of unwillingness to live by the principles therein revealed (see Hosea 4:6). As a result, his spiritual eyes were totally blind when he was brought face to face with the Light of life (see John 1:7–11). Not having taken advantage of light already revealed, he was unprepared for greater light.

28. Blessed God. Or, "praised God," as in ch. 1:64. On the OT meaning of the expression "to bless God," see on Ps. 63:4.

29. Lord. Gr. *despotēs*, meaning, "absolute ruler." The word *despotēs* of itself originally gave no indication whether the "absolute ruler" was good or bad. However, to place absolute power in the hands of any human being is a dangerous thing. A person's character is soon shown in his use of such power, the extent of his wickedness being revealed in the degree of his abuse of power. Human nature being what it is, absolute power usually tends to bring out the bad in a man rather than the good; hence the English words "despot," "despotic," and "despotism," derived from *despotēs*, all reflect the tyrannical, evil use of power. But the use of *despotēs*, in reference to God, presents a different idea. God, as "absolute Ruler," would reflect in His government the absolute perfection of His own character. *Despotēs* is used infrequently of the Lord (Acts 4:24; Jude 4; Rev. 6:10); rather, it is used of a "master" of slaves (1 Tim. 6:1, 2; 2 Tim. 2:21; Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18). The usual NT word for Lord, or lord, is *kurios*, which simply denotes a superior without specifying the degree of superiority. Often *kurios* was used simply as a title of respect, as we use "sir."

In vs. 29, 30 Simeon speaks of what the Messiah means to him personally; in vs. 31, 32 his thoughts turn to what the Messiah means to all men.

Lettest & ellipsis; depart. Simeon has accomplished his objective. He has lived to see the expected One. There is no further desire or request on his part, and he is ready for the release from service that death brings. See on v. 26.

In peace. Simeon realized his heart's desire as, by faith, he saw in the infant Jesus the fulfillment of the Messianic promises of the OT. In the hearts of all men there is an emptiness that cannot be filled, a longing that cannot be satisfied, except in Jesus. We should not rest until, like Simeon, we too have seen, by faith, "the Lord's Christ."

30. Salvation. Gr. *sōtērion* (see on v. 11). In the LXX *sōtērion* is often used for the Heb. *shelem*, "a thank offering," or "a peace offering" (see Vol. I, p. 700).

31. Prepared. Or, "made ready."

All people. Literally, "all peoples." Luke again takes note of the universal appeal of the gospel message (see Vol. IV, pp. 28-30).

32. A light. See on ch. 1:78, 79.

To lighten. Literally, “for a revelation.” The “vail that is spread over all nations” (Isa. 25:7) was to be removed (see Isa. 60:1–3).

The Gentiles. From the earliest times the Hebrew people were instructed concerning their appointed role as representatives of the true God before the nations of earth. This vital fact was clearly stated in the first promise made to Abraham (Gen. 12:3), and later repeated to Isaac (Gen. 26:4) and to Jacob (Gen. 28:14). The same truth was more clearly announced to Israel as the people came out of Egypt and prepared to enter the Promised Land (see Deut. 4:6–8; 28:10; etc.). From generation to generation the prophets ever held up before the people the worldwide scope of their sacred trust (see Ps. 98:3; Isa. 42:6; 49:6; 53:10; 56:6, 7; 60:1–3; 61:9; Isa. 62:2; Zech. 2:11; 8:22; etc.). Christ repeatedly pointed out that His mission included Gentiles as well as Jews (see Matt. 12:18, 21; John 12:32; etc.). See Vol. IV, pp. 26–30.

The glory. The Jews were given privileges far exceeding those of any other people, in order that they might become fit representatives of the true God before the nations of earth (see Vol. IV, pp. 28–30). Heaven’s choice did not fall upon them because they were wiser or better than other nations, but because God saw fit to make them His special ambassadors of light and truth (see Deut. 7:7, 8). Their progenitor, Abraham, was an earnest seeker for truth, and as such submitted himself to God’s guidance. The Lord is constantly ready to work with those who are willing to be led by Him. The special advantage of the Jews as a nation consisted chiefly in the fact that they were to be the recipients, custodians, and heralds of truth (see Rom. 3:1, 2; 9:4, 5).

People. Gr. *laos*, a term NT writers consistently apply to their own people, either to the Jews or to fellow Christian believers. The word “Gentiles” is from *ethnos*, “a multitude living together,” hence, “a nation.” In the NT *ethnos* is consistently translated “nation,” or “Gentile.”

33. Joseph. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “father.” This reading does not necessarily imply a denial of the virgin birth, which fact Luke has stated clearly and unequivocally (Luke 1:26–35; cf. Matt. 1:18–25). In this instance, Luke would be thinking of Joseph in the legal and popular sense, but certainly not in the literal, physical sense (see on Matt. 1:21, 24). As the husband of Mary, Joseph became, in a certain real sense, the father of Jesus the moment Jesus was born. Thenceforth, or at least from the time of the Temple enrollment, in the customary language of the day, Joseph was looked upon as such (see Luke 3:23; 4:22; John 6:42). The first of Joseph’s duties in his role as legal father of Jesus was naming the child (see Matt. 1:21). Later, by divine direction, Joseph acted in that role (see Matt. 2:13, 19–22). That it is by no means inappropriate to speak of Joseph as the father of Jesus in this sense is evident from the fact that Mary herself uses this term (Luke 2:48). Also in v. 27, Luke includes Joseph as one of the “parents” of Jesus, certainly not in a literal sense, yet in an entirely appropriate, popular sense (see DA 82).

Marvelled. Not in the sense of surprise, for the angel had already appeared both to Joseph (Matt. 1:20) and to Mary (Luke 1:26, 27) with a similar message. Furthermore Elisabeth had addressed Mary with words obviously inspired (vs. 41–45). Also, Joseph and Mary had heard the account of the shepherds (ch. 2:20). Their wonder grew with each successive evidence of the Messiahship of the child Jesus, as Inspiration made ever

clearer the task appointed Him by His Father in heaven. Perhaps, also, they were surprised that a stranger should recognize the great secret.

34. *Said unto Mary.* It would seem that Simeon, by inspiration, understood the fact of the virgin birth. He seems completely to have ignored Joseph.

The fall and rising. Christ spoke of Himself as “the stone which the builders rejected” (Matt. 21:42; see on Ps. 118:22). “We must fall upon the Rock and be broken before we can be uplifted in Christ” (DA 57).

Christ is the great Magnet of the ages, drawing to Himself those who are humble and contrite in heart. Some, like Matthew, Zacchaeus, and Mary Magdalene—commonly thought of as “publicans and sinners”—felt themselves strangely attracted to the Physician who could make their broken lives whole again. Others, like the scribes and Pharisees, who thought themselves in no need of the heavenly Physician, were driven from the Saviour by their own perversity of spirit.

Sign. Gr. *sēmeion*, “a sign,” “a mark,” or “a token.” As the representative of heaven Christ is the symbol of salvation. He is a living token, or witness, to the love of the Father, of which His mission to earth provides irrefutable evidence (see John 3:16; DA 19).

35. *Sword.* Gr. *rhomphaia*, used to describe a large sword, such as the long Thracian sword. *Rhomphaia* is to be distinguished from the usual NT word for sword, *machaira*, a word describing the short Roman sword. *Rhomphaia* appears in the LXX for the sword of Goliath. Presumably, the *rhomphaia* was a more formidable weapon than the *machaira*, and is used here figuratively to describe the sorrow that pierced Mary’s heart at the cross (see John 19:25; DA 744, 752). This, the first NT foreshadowing of the passion of Christ, reflects the prophecies of Isa. 52:14; 53:12. These mysterious words of Simeon must have passed over Mary’s consciousness like a chilling and ominous portent of things to come. Furthermore, the fact that Simeon’s declaration was addressed to Mary seems to imply that Joseph would not witness the scene on Calvary.

Thy own soul. Like all other Jews, Mary doubtless expected Jesus to reign gloriously upon the earthly throne of David (cf. ch. 1:32). This expectation, shared even by the disciples of Christ, could only make the disappointment of the cross more bitter. But God in His mercy gave her this intimation of what to expect.

Revealed. Literally, “uncovered,” or “unveiled.”

36. *Anna. Hanna,* from the Heb. *Channah*, “Hannah” (see on 1 Sam. 1:2). This aged saint bears the same name as that of the mother of Samuel, the founder of the schools of the prophets. According to the apocryphal gospels and a tradition later adopted by the church, Mary had been reared in the Temple under the guardianship and guidance of Anna, who was supposedly her mother. This is simple fiction. There is nothing here to indicate that the two women had met previously. Anna’s continuing presence in the Temple speaks eloquently of the love with which she served the Lord. The biographical detail with which Luke speaks of an obscure Bible personage such as Anna testifies to the historical quality of his account.

A prophetess. The gift of prophecy was from time to time bestowed upon devout women as well as upon men. Among the prophetesses were such women as Miriam (Ex.

15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Isaiah's wife (Isa. 8:3), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), and also the four virgin daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9).

Of a great age. Literally, "advanced in many days." Anna was at the very least 84 years old (see on v. 37), and more likely well over 100 years old.

37. Fourscore and four years. It is somewhat uncertain from the Greek whether the expression translated "of about fourscore and four years" is to be understood as applying to Anna's age or to the duration of her widowhood. Commentators are about evenly divided on the question. Some translations apply the period to her age (as the RSV), and others, to her widowhood (as Moffatt). The KJV rendering, "a widow of about fourscore and four years," reflects somewhat the ambiguous phraseology of the original. The details given and the wording used seem to indicate that the 84 years most likely refers to the period of Anna's widowhood. If Anna had been married at the early age of 15, had been married for 7 years, and then remained a widow for 84 years, she would then be 106 years of age. This would by no means be impossible, though the age of 84 would also make her "of a great age."

Departed not. Some have understood this to mean that Anna, as a pensioner of the Temple, had been assigned a room adjacent to the precincts of the Temple, perhaps with other widows, and that in return she devoted her time to teaching the young women who came to the Temple for religious instruction. Whether there was provision for this in the days of Christ is not known. Others think that she "departed not from the temple" in the same sense that the disciples, after the ascension, "were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (see Luke 24:53; Acts 2:46). It is obvious that in this latter instance Luke does not mean Temple residence, but rather regular attendance at religious services in the Temple, plus witnessing before the people who assembled there (see Acts 3:1; Acts 5:12, 20, 21, 25, 42; etc.).

Night and day. Probably a reference to the morning and evening hours of worship. Whatever the case may have been with regard to her residence (see foregoing), it is evident Anna faithfully attended the hours of morning and evening worship. Her life was absorbed in the service of God; she had no other interests to distract her attention. Such a life Paul eulogizes as most appropriate to one who is "a widow indeed" (see 1 Tim. 5:5).

38. Instant. Rather, "hour," that is, when Simeon was speaking. Hearing Simeon's inspired testimony concerning Jesus, Anna's own heart was touched with inspired insight to see in the child Jesus the promised Messiah (see DA 55; cf. Matthew 16:17). Thus at the dedication, two inspired witnesses confirmed what Mary and Joseph already knew concerning the child.

Gave thanks. The word "likewise" has been supplied by the translators. The Greek verb used here implies thanks or praise "returned" in appreciation for a gift or favor received. It is clear, therefore, that Luke refers to Anna's praise simply as an expression of joy at seeing the Messiah.

Spake. According to the force of the Greek tense, "kept on speaking." Heretofore she had spoken of the prophecies that pointed forward to the coming of the Messiah; now she could speak from personal experience of the fact that the Messiah *had* come.

Them that looked. This cryptic expression reveals the fact that there was a small but earnest group of people who studied the prophecies and were aware that "the fullness of the time was come" (Galatians 4:4; cf. Daniel 9:24-27; DA 34, 35; see on Luke 2:25).

In Jerusalem. Important textual evidence (cf. p. 146) may also be cited for the reading “of Jerusalem” (compare this with “consolation of Israel,” v. 25).

39. *Performed all things.* [*Return to Nazareth*, Luke 2:39, 40=Matthew 2:19–23. Major comment: Matthew and Luke. See *Childhood and Youth of Jesus*.] Jesus was born “under the law” (Galatians 4:4), a Jew, and therefore fulfilled all requirements of the “law of the Lord,” as the Levitical laws pertaining to purification and presentation (Luke 2:22–24) are here called. Although given to Israel by the hand of Moses, these laws had originated with God (see Deuteronomy 5:31–33). The Ten Commandments alone were given directly by God to the people (see Deuteronomy 5:22).

They returned. Luke does not mention the visit of the wise men or the flight into Egypt, both of which preceded the return to Galilee (see Matthew 2:1–23). A similar omission of narrative detail occurs in Acts 9:26, where Luke implies that Saul went immediately from Damascus to Jerusalem. But it is evident from Galatians 1:17, 18 that there was an interval of three years before Paul returned to Jerusalem. It is apparent that the visit of the wise men followed the dedication in the Temple, for it would seem incredible that Joseph should take Mary and Jesus to Jerusalem after being warned to flee to Egypt to escape from Herod. When the family returned to Nazareth, Herod was dead, and his son Archelaus ruled in his stead (see Matthew 2:19–23). Archelaus reigned from 4 B.C. to A.D. 6: Therefore the return to Nazareth must have come within this time, probably shortly after the beginning of the reign of Archelaus.

Nazareth. See on Matthew 2:23.

40. *The child grew.* This passage covers the childhood of Jesus, till He was 12 years of age (v. 42), as vs. 51, 52 cover His youth and young manhood. The development of the human nature and personality of Jesus Christ proceeded apace in a normal way, except that He never once yielded to sin. He lived as a normal child and youth would live, in the family circle. He passed through these years as every human being does, so far as physical, mental, spiritual, and social growth are concerned (see on v. 52), except that no flaws marred the process of growth. This growth process clearly attests the true humanity of Jesus, as its perfection attests His divinity.

Waxed strong. The same two expressions, “grew” and “waxed strong,” are used of the development of John the Baptist (ch. 1:80). Both John and Jesus were hearty and vigorous.

In spirit. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words. The expression refers to the development of a symmetrical personality.

Filled with wisdom. The process of mental growth kept pace with that of physical growth. Summed up in this expression are the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of the child (see on v. 52).

Grace. Or, “favor,” that is, the approval of God (see on v. 52). Compare the direct testimony of the Father at Christ’s baptism (ch. 3:22).

41. *His parents.* [*First Passover Visit*, Luke 2:41–50. See *Childhood and Youth of Jesus*; a Suggestive Chronology of Christ’s Birth.] The reference here to Joseph as one of the “parents” of Jesus in no way implies a denial of the virgin birth, already so explicitly recorded by Luke (ch. 1:31–35). During childhood Jesus accepted and benefited by the fatherly care and protection of Joseph (see on Matthew 1:24), and even as a youth continued to be “subject” to him, as every youth should be to his father (see Luke 2:51). In v. 48 Mary speaks to Jesus of Joseph as “thy father.”

Went to Jerusalem. The Greek tense shows that Joseph and Mary were accustomed to go to Jerusalem for the purpose of attending the annual religious festivals held there (see on Leviticus 23:2). In the case of Joseph, attendance at the three great feasts was required by law (see on Exodus 23:14–17; Deut 16:16). That Mary customarily accompanied him testifies to her devotion to spiritual things, for attendance on the part of women, though recommended, was not required.

The passover. The first of the three great annual feasts, the others being Pentecost and Tabernacles (see on Exodus 23:14–17; Leviticus 23:2). Commemorating as it did the deliverance of the Hebrews from the oppression of Egypt, the Passover festival was an impressive reminder of the series of dramatic events by which God had made of Israel an independent nation. The importance of the Passover to the Hebrew people is attested by the fact that they usually attended this festival even if they considered it impossible to be at Jerusalem for the others. It was the high point of the religious year, for without the events it commemorated they would have remained in bondage to the Egyptians. Not only so, but the Passover typified the Messiah (see 1 Cor. 5:7), the hope of whose coming bound the nation together and preserved it from generation to generation.

42. Twelve years old. According to Jewish reckoning Jesus would be considered 12 years of age upon reaching His 11th birthday (see on Gen. 5:32; Matthew 2:16), and would be “twelve years old” until his 12th birthday. It was upon completing the 12th year that a Jewish boy was confirmed as a “son of the law” (DA 75) and became personally obligated to observe the various religious ordinances. The 12th year marked the transition from childhood to youth. At the age of three, Jewish boys were given the tasseled garment prescribed by the law of Moses (see on Numbers 15:38–41; Deuteronomy 22:12), and at the age of five they were expected to memorize portions of the law. At the close of the 12th year they were supposed to wear tephillin, or phylacteries (see on Exodus 13:9), at the hours of prayer— as required by rabbinical tradition, though not by the law of Moses. Jesus never complied with this tradition (see DA 84; cf. Matthew 23:5). According to the Mishnah (*Aboth* 5. 21, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 75), Hebrew boys became personally responsible for observing the commandments at the age of 13, that is, upon the completion of their 12th year. If the birth of Jesus occurred in the autumn of 5 B.C., as seems probable (see p. 241), His 12th year, according to Jewish reckoning, would be from the autumn of A.D. 7 to the autumn of A.D. 8, and His first Passover would be that of the following year, A.D. 9. See *The Ministry of Our Lord*.

They went up. See on v. 41. In the time of Christ, Jews traveling between Galilee and Judea avoided, if possible, the more direct route through Samaria, because of hostility between Jews and Samaritans (see DA 487). It is likely, therefore, that Jesus and His parents made this journey by way of the Jordan valley, which provided an alternate route. Being now “twelve years old,” Jesus attended the Passover for the first time. This was probably also His first visit to Jerusalem since the dedication, and therefore His first view of the Temple (see DA 78).

After the custom. Faithful compliance with all the requirements of the law was characteristic of Joseph and Mary (see on Matthew 1:19; Luke 2:21–24).

43. Fulfilled the days. The paschal lamb was usually slain late in the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan, and eaten after sunset the same night, on the 15th (see Additional Notes on Matthew 26, Note 1). The 15th also was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which continued through the 21st, the 15th and 21st of Nisan being celebrated as

sabbaths regardless of the days of the week on which they might fall (see on Exodus 12:16; Leviticus 23:6, 7). On the 16th the wave sheaf was presented before the Lord. The ceremonies of the 14th to the 16th day of the feast were considered the most important, and on the 17th those who had come up to Jerusalem to attend the feast were permitted to return home should they choose to do so. One circumstance narrated by Luke (see on v. 46) has led many commentators to think that Mary and Joseph departed at this time. However, the devotion with which they observed the requirements of the ritual law (see on vs. 41, 42) would seem to have led them to remain for the duration of the entire feast rather than only for the minimum time required by the rabbis. See Passion Week and Jesus' Resurrection to Ascension.

Child. Gr. *pais*, “a boy” or, “a lad.” In v. 40 the word translated “child” is from *paidon*, the diminutive form of *pais*.

Jesus tarried. Christ's obedient nature, even as a child, gave Joseph and Mary every reason for confidence in Him; His “bright, receptive mind,” marked by “thoughtfulness and wisdom beyond His years” (DA 68, 69), made His obedience not blind but intelligent. Even as a child, Jesus was ever attentive to, and anticipated the wants of, his parents (DA 80). He always seemed to know what to do, and was faithful in doing it; and on this occasion Mary and Joseph took for granted that He would do as He had done in the past.

Upon this visit to Jerusalem, Jesus for the first time realized that He was in a unique sense the Son of God (see DA 75, 78), and the implications of His earthly mission began to dawn upon His mind. He sincerely longed for a clearer understanding of the nature of His appointed work, and lingered in the Temple, the earthly house of His heavenly Father (see John 2:16), to commune further with Him.

The period of youth is ordained of God to be the time when children learn to think and act for themselves and to accept responsibility for their choices. When younger, they are of necessity largely dependent upon their parents in these matters; but when the period of youth draws to a close they are expected to have assumed the role of maturity. From the very first, parents should seek to develop in their children the ability to choose intelligently and to sense personal responsibility. But as childhood blends imperceptibly into youth it should be the purpose of parents to foster progress in this direction as rapidly as the child is qualified to accept the responsibilities of maturity. Young people should be permitted to make their own choices and to act independently of their parents as fast as they demonstrate the capacity to do so intelligently. There are few sights more pathetic than a youth at the border of maturity still bound to his parents by the limitations of choice and action that are appropriate to childhood. No person is less prepared to assume the responsibilities that accompany maturity. At the same time, youth should be taught to appreciate and consider seriously the counsel and admonition of their parents, and, throughout life, to seek benefit from the wisdom and experience of others (see on v. 51).

Joseph and his mother. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “his parents” (see on v. 41).

44. Supposing. Jesus had never given His parents a valid reason for anxiety. They presumed that He was acquainted with their plans to return with “the company,” and that He knew the proposed time for departure.

Company. Gr. *sunodia*, “a company of travelers,” or “a caravan,” from *sun*, “together with,” and *hodos*, “a road,” or “a way.” For companionship and protection, those attending the various annual feasts at Jerusalem customarily traveled in large groups. Often all of those going from a village or town would plan to travel together in a caravan. In the bustle of departure of a large caravan it would be difficult for Joseph and Mary to check with all their relatives and friends to learn where Jesus was. Furthermore, as it was customary for the women to travel in a group ahead of the men, it is possible that Joseph and Mary were separated shortly after they set out on the road, and that each supposed Jesus to be with the other.

A day’s journey. The return journey to Nazareth would probably take a group such as this several days at best (see on v. 42). The first day’s journey, if they followed the Jordan route, would probably carry them no farther than Jericho, 15 mi. (24 km.) from Jerusalem.

They sought. They sought persistently and thoroughly. We can well imagine the increasing anxiety of Joseph and Mary as they began their search late in the day, after “a day’s journey,” and continued to go from relative to relative and from friend to friend throughout the camping site of their caravan. Such a search must have carried them well into the night. But their efforts were fruitless. Jesus was nowhere to be found!

46. After three days. That is, from the time when they first noticed that Jesus was not in the company. Undoubtedly Joseph and Mary rose early the next morning to wend their way back to Jerusalem, their hearts filled with dreadful forebodings, for well they recalled Herod’s desperate attempts to take His life. If they had stopped at Jericho (see on v. 44), it would now be necessary for them to ascend the steep road to Jerusalem, an ascent of over 3,000 ft. Having retraced their steps to Jerusalem, they spent the few remaining hours of this the “second” day searching for their Son. But in vain! This day’s search was as fruitless as that of the closing hours of the previous day. The next day they resumed their task. Their sorrow and distress were turned to joy and gladness when on this day they heard the voice of Jesus among the worshipers in the Temple. According to Jewish reckoning it would thus be the “third” day in which they found Jesus in the Temple (see DA 81). By this system of inclusive reckoning, the first and last days of a period of time are included in computing elapsed time (see pp. 248-250).

Temple. Gr. *hieron*, the entire Temple complex, including the courts or halls of the sacred precincts that surrounded the Temple. The Temple building by itself is usually designated by the Gr. *naos*. A rabbinical school was conducted on one of the terraces or in one of the halls within the Temple area, particularly at festal seasons.

Sitting. The posture of a learner. Compare Acts 22:3.

Doctors. Literally, “teachers,” that is, rabbis or scribes learned in the sacred writings and in oral tradition (see p. 55). Outstanding among the “doctors” of the preceding generation had been Hillel the elder, founder of an influential school of Jewish thought. Hardly less distinguished was Shammai, a more conservative master of Jewish law. Noted “doctors” in Christ’s day were Gamaliel, Saul’s teacher (see Acts 22:3), Simeon, son and successor of Hillel, Nicodemus (see on John 3:1, 10), and possibly Joseph of Arimathaea (see on Matthew 27:57). One or more of these men, known to be active teachers of the time, may have been present upon this occasion. It was usual, particularly on Sabbaths and feast days, to find these men sitting on benches on the Temple terrace,

with their pupils seated on the ground about them. Some commentators have suggested that mention of the “doctors” here implies that the Feast of Unleavened Bread was still in progress, and that Joseph and Mary had left early, as permitted by custom (see on Luke 2:43).

Hearing them. That is, listening to their exposition of Scripture and tradition, to their questions, and to their replies to questions. The usual rabbinical mode of instruction was by means of questions, answers, and discussion.

Asking them questions. That is, as a sincere and respectful learner. Mary and Joseph had hoped that on this visit to Jerusalem, Jesus would come in contact with the revered and learned rabbis, that He might learn to respect them and so comply with their rabbinical requirements. However, it soon became evident that Jesus’ understanding of the prophecies exceeded that of the rabbis. His intelligent questions opened their eyes to overlooked truths concerning Messiah’s mission and contemporary prophetic fulfillments that proved Messiah’s appearance near (see DA 78, 80; cf. 30, 55, 212, 234, 257).

Among these events was doubtless that of A.D. 6, when the local ruler, Archelaus, was deposed and Judea for the first time was organized as a province governed directly by a Roman procurator subject to the governor of Syria. Under successive foreign empires Judea had considered itself a subject state, but with “home rule” by Jewish princes or priests (Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the later high priests), by Maccabean priest-kings, and, even under Rome, by the local king Herod. Now this new action must have led many to feel that by the sure word of prophecy the Messiah must soon appear. Years ago the prophet had written, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come” (see on Gen. 49:10; see DA 34, 103, 104).

Astonished. These religious leaders were at a loss to account for the fact that a child who, as they well knew, had not learned in the schools of the rabbis (see DA 80; see on John 7:15) should have the profound understanding of the prophecies that Jesus obviously had. God had been His teacher, through the precepts of Mary, through Jesus’ own study of the scrolls of the prophets, and now through the direct impression of truth upon His heart as He meditated in the courts of the Temple (see DA 70, 78). In contrast, the teaching of the rabbis tended to obscure rather than clarify truth—to encourage ignorance rather than impart knowledge (see DA 69).

His understanding. That is, of the Scriptures, particularly of the prophecies that pointed to the coming of the Messiah, the mission of Israel to the nations, and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. His understanding of the Word of God was not darkened by the devious and misleading explanations that were the stock in trade of the rabbis and elders. Jesus was familiar not only with the letter but also with the spirit of the Scriptures. He was heedless of rabbinical interpretation. No errors confused His thinking.

Answers. These venerable teachers plied Jesus with questions in an effort to fathom the depth of His grasp of the Scriptures, and were intrigued by His clear and logical answers, which were all based on the Scriptures. If as an “unlearned” lad Jesus possessed so profound an understanding of the law and the prophets, thought the masters of Israel, what would He become when thoroughly trained at their hands? Like a master singer realizing the possibilities latent in an untrained but naturally beautiful voice, they no doubt envisioned in Jesus the greatest teacher Israel had ever known.

48. When they saw him. Mary and Joseph were “amazed” at that portion of the conversation between Jesus and the doctors of the law which they had overheard. But

more than that, they were astonished at the appearance of Jesus. “On His face was a light at which they wondered. Divinity was flashing through humanity” (DA 81) for the first time, in testimony to the truth that the Son of man was none other than the Son of God (see on Matthew 1:1; Additional Note on John 1).

Thus dealt with us. Literally, “done thus to us?”

Thy father and I. For the last time in the entire gospel narrative Joseph is spoken of as the “father” of Jesus. Now that Jesus was aware of His relationship to His heavenly Father, it is appropriate that His earthly “father” should fade from the gospel picture (see on v. 51). The silence of the Scriptures concerning Joseph from this time forth suggests that he did not live to see the opening of Christ’s public ministry (see DA 145). For reference to Joseph as the “father” of Jesus, see on v. 33.

49. How is it? The words of Jesus do not reflect resentment that His parents were concerned about Him, but innocent surprise that they should have experienced difficulty and anxiety in finding Him. Why should they have had so difficult a time finding their Son? Where else in Jerusalem would they expect to find Him but in the Temple? They knew of His interest in and devotion to religious things. And why should they have been “sorrowing” and “anxious” for Him? Had He ever given them occasion for concern? He had simply remained in the Temple when they departed. That was where they had left Him (see DA 78), and where they might expect to find Him again. Furthermore, He had not run off from them; they had left without Him. The blame lay with His parents, and they should not have censured Him. However, Jesus’ awareness of His relationship to His heavenly Father did not lessen His sense of duty toward His earthly parents (see v. 51).

Wist ye not? Did you not know? But “they understood not” (v. 50).

I must be. Literally, “it is necessary for me to be,” or “it behooves me to be.” Was not Jesus ever true to duty? Did He not always deal faithfully with His assigned tasks? As a child, Jesus was already conscious of the destiny that called upon Him to do, not His own will, but the will of His Father in heaven (see Matthew 7:21; 26:39; John 4:34).

My Father’s business. Literally, “in the [things] of my Father,” an expression that could refer either to the “business” of His Father or to the “house” (RSV) of His Father. Mary had just referred to Joseph as the “father” of Jesus (v. 48). Jesus does not deny that relationship directly, but affirms distinctly that God in heaven is His Father. For the first time in His life Jesus understands and proclaims His divine sonship. It is worthy of note that these, the first recorded words of Jesus, affirm His deity. In His own heart was born an understanding of the mystery of His mission to earth (DA 82), but His parents “understood not the saying which he spake unto them” (v. 50).

Before Christ came to this earth the plan for His life “lay out before Him, perfect in all its details” (DA 147). Like the time set for the incarnation (Galatians 4:4; DA 31), “each event in His work had its appointed hour” (DA 451). Nevertheless, when He came to earth He was guided step by step, as He walked among men, by the Father’s will, unfolded to Him day by day (DA 147). For comment on the prayer life of Jesus, the avenue through which divine guidance was made a reality in His life, see on Mark 1:35; 3:13.

Again and again Jesus expressed the thought, “My time is not yet come” (John 7:6, 8); but as the last Passover He said, “My time is at hand” (Matthew 26:18). It is our privilege to live a life daily surrendered to the Father as Christ did, and to be guided in fulfilling our appointed part in His great plan (DA 209; see John 15:10).

Throughout the days of eternity the Lord Jesus was equal with the Father (see on John 1:1–3), but at the time of the incarnation He accepted a role subordinate to the Father (see Additional Note on John 1; see on Luke 1:31, 35; John 1:14). Now at the age of 12 He became aware for the first time of His Sonship to the heavenly Father and of His role as a man among men.

50. *They understood not.* “Wist ye not?” Jesus had asked His parents, but “they understood not” His implied denial of Joseph and His affirmation of God as His Father. Mary “knew that He had disclaimed kinship to Joseph, and had declared His Sonship to God” (DA 82), but she did not grasp the full import of His words, particularly as they applied to His lifework. From this time forth His course of action was a mystery to His parents (DA 89). The word “they” here undoubtedly refers to Mary and Joseph. If even “they” understood not, the same would certainly be true of the doctors of the law and others present.

51. *Subject.* [*Youth and Young Manhood*, Luke 2:51, 52. See *Childhood and Youth of Jesus*; *Synopsis of the Life of Christ*.] Or, “obedient” to them. Though clearly disclaiming sonship to Joseph, Jesus nevertheless dutifully submitted to him, as a son should be expected to submit to his father so long as he remains under the paternal roof. For 18 years before He left home Jesus realized that He was the Son of God, yet during those 18 years He remained dutiful as a son to those who were His earthly guardians. As the Son of God He might have considered Himself exempt from parental jurisdiction, but as an example to all youth He was “obedient” to His human parents. It is therefore evident that Jesus’ reply in v. 49 was in no sense a repudiation of the authority of Joseph and Mary.

During these 18 years Jesus became known to His fellow townsmen as “the carpenter” of Nazareth (Mark 6:3) and “the carpenter’s son” (Matt. 13:55). At some time during these 18 years, Joseph died, for at the close of this period of time the shop is spoken of as “the carpenter shop that had been Joseph’s” (DA 109; cf. 145). Luke 2:51 is the last indirect Scripture reference to Joseph in the narrative of Christ’s life (see on v. 48).

Kept. Gr. *diate’reo*, “to keep carefully.” Mary held onto these “sayings,” or “things,” and kept them vividly in her memory (see on v. 19).

52. *Jesus increased.* Jesus’ childhood and youth were years of harmonious development of His physical, mental, and spiritual powers (see Ed 13). The goal toward which He aspired was to reflect perfectly the character of His Father in heaven. Here was perfect humanity, restored to the image of God. Thirty years of constant preparation preceded a brief ministry of 3 1/2 years. The statement of v. 40 refers particularly to the childhood of Jesus, and that of v. 52 primarily to His youth and young manhood. Similar statements are made concerning the youth of Samuel (1 Sam. 2:26) and that of John the Baptist (Luke 1:80).

The superstitious legends regarding the childhood and youth of Jesus which are recorded in the apocryphal gospels of the early Christian centuries, stand forth in strange contrast with the simple dignity, beauty, and compelling power of the Bible narrative. For illustrations of these legendary accounts, see the apocryphal work, 1 *Infancy* 7:1–35; 13:1–13; 15:1–7; 16:1–16; 18:1–19. Jesus apparently performed no miracles prior to the time He took up His public ministry (cf. DA 72, 74, 92).

Wisdom. Gr. *sophia*, “broad and full intelligence”; that is, mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense (see on ch. 1:17). *Sophia* includes not only knowledge but the ability and judgment to apply that knowledge to the circumstances and situations of life. It is important to a proper understanding of how Christ met the problems of life to recognize that He was not born, or supernaturally endowed, with knowledge, understanding, and wisdom—He “increased,” or “grew,” in wisdom. “Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did” (DA 70).

Stature. Jesus engaged in the highest type of exercise, *useful* exercise, which alone can impart true physical strength and develop fully the faculties. This trained Him to bear His share of life’s burdens; it was a benefit to Him and a blessing to others (DA 72).

Favour with God. From the first dawning of intelligence Jesus was constantly growing in spiritual grace and in a knowledge of the truth. He grew in moral strength and understanding through hours spent alone in nature—particularly those of the early morning—meditating, searching the Scriptures, and seeking His Father in prayer (see DA 90). In Nazareth, proverbial for its wickedness even in that perverse generation, He was ever exposed to temptation and had to be constantly on guard to preserve His purity of character (DA 71, 116).

At the close of His years of preparation for service the Father testified of Him, “Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased” (ch. 3:22). He was a living example of what it means to be “perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48; DA 72).

For further comment on how Jesus met and triumphed over temptation see on Matt. 4:1–11; 26:38–41; Luke 2:40; Heb. 2:17; EGW Supplementary Material, on Luke 2:40.

Man. In personality, Jesus was known for a singular loveliness of disposition (DA 68, 254), a patience that nothing could disturb (DA 68, 69), the grace of unselfish courtesy (DA 69), cheerfulness and tact (DA 73, 87), sympathy and tenderness (DA 74), youthful modesty and grace (DA 80). From childhood, His one purpose in life was to bless others (DA 70, 90, 92), and His willing hands were ever ready to serve them (DA 86). He performed faithfully the duties of a son, brother, friend, and citizen (DA 72, 82).

The perfect character development of Jesus from infancy to manhood, without sin, is, perhaps, the most amazing fact of His entire life. It staggers the imagination. And in view of the assurances that He enjoyed no opportunities that God is unwilling to provide for our children (DA 70), we may profitably inquire, “How can these things be?” (cf. John 3:9).

In the first place, “Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity” (DA 49). He was permitted “to meet life’s peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss” (DA 49). In the second place, the child Jesus was not supernaturally endowed with wisdom above that of other normal children. He thought, spoke, and acted with the wisdom of a child (DA 70, 71; COL 83). “But at each stage of His development He was perfect, with the simple, natural grace of a sinless life” (COL 83). In the third place, the environment in which Jesus grew up—the proverbial wickedness of Nazareth—subjected Him “to all the conflicts which we have to meet” (DA 71; cf. 116), yet even in childhood and youth His life was not marred by a single wrong thought or act (DA 88).

It is largely by the precept and example of their parents that the character of children is determined. When children are privileged to see in their parents' lives a reflection of the tenderness, justice, and patience of God, they come to know Him as He is (PP 308). The cultivation of love for, trust in, and obedience to earthly parents prepares children to love, trust, and obey their heavenly Father (see PK 245; 4T 337; see on Matt. 1:16). If parents will come humbly to the Saviour today, willing to be guided by Him in the training of their children, they are promised grace sufficient to mold the characters of their children as Mary did that of the child Jesus (see DA 69; cf. 512).

Parents who would see the character of Jesus reflected in their children will avail themselves of the wealth of inspired counsel available on this important subject, and will diligently and patiently apply it in the family circle (see COL 80–89, 325–365; DA 68–74, 84–92; MH 349–394). Like Abraham, they will “command” their children and household (see on Gen. 18:19) with kindness, patience, and understanding (see Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21)—yet with firmness (see on Prov. 13:24; 19:18).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–3, 7 DA 44
 1–20DA 43–49
 7–11DA 47
 8, 9 MH 477
 10 Ev 387
 10, 11 DA 231; Te 284
 10–14GC 314; ML 363
 12–14EW 153
 14 AA 579; DA 48, 308, 803; GC 46; GW 283, 469; PP 65; Te 284; 6T 421; 8T 139
 18–20DA 48
 21–38DA 50–58
 22, 24 DA 50
 25 GC 315
 25, 26 DA 55
 29–32 CT 446; DA 55; FE 448
 32 DA 465; GC 315
 34 DA 231
 34, 35 DA 55, 56; 4T 55
 35 DA 145
 36, 38 DA 55, 231
 39, 40 PP 592
 40 AH 290, 507; CG 187, 205, 345; COL 83; CT 141, 147, 178; DA 68; Ed 78; FE 392, 418, 438, 443; MH 400; ML 298; MYP 78; 8T, 223
 41, 42 DA 75
 41–51 DA 75–83
 42–476T 75
 43–45DA 80
 46, 47 Ev 140; FE 400
 46–49DA 81
 48, 49 GW 111; MH 19
 49 COL 283; DA 146, 486; FE 392

51 FE 142, 393; 3T 566; 5T 42

51, 52 FE 438; ML 299

52 AH 290, 297; CG 187, 205; COL 83; CT 141, 260, 446; DA 68, 74; FE 392, 400, 448; MH 349; ML 298; 1T 339

CHAPTER 3

1 *The preaching and baptism of John: 15 his testimony of Christ. 20 Herod imprisoneth John. 21 Christ baptized, receiveth testimony from heaven. 23 The age and genealogy of Christ from Joseph upwards.*

1. Fifteenth year. [*Ministry of John the Baptist*, Luke 3:1–18=Matt. 3:1–12=Mark 1:1–8. Major comment: Matthew and Luke. See *The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2*] In ancient times it was the usual custom to date events by the regnal years of a reigning king or by the names of officials under whom the events occurred. There was no universal chronology in any way comparable to what we use today. Although in some respects the six points of historical note Luke gives here present Bible students with a chronological problem today, they unmistakably mark Luke as a historian who took great pains to be thorough and accurate (see on ch. 1:1–4), and so testify to the reliability of his gospel narrative. The chief chronological difficulty presented here lies in correlating the “fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar” with other available chronological data on the life of Christ and with Christian Era dating. For a discussion of this problem see pp. 243–247.

Though Luke is generally considered to have been a Gentile, it seems he may here be using the form of chronological reckoning then current among the Jews. On the basis of a fall-to-fall year and the nonaccession-year system for figuring regnal years (see Vol. II, pp. 136–139), the first year of Tiberius would be considered to have closed in the autumn of A.D. 14. Accordingly, his “fifteenth year” would begin in the autumn of A.D. 27 and continue until the autumn of A.D. 28. According to DA 233 the baptism of Jesus occurred during the fall of A.D. 27, and thus very early during the “fifteenth year” of Tiberius.

Another process by which some have sought to determine the commencement of Christ’s ministry is based on John 2:13, 20, which places the first Passover of His public ministry in the 46th year of the Temple. For a discussion of this problem see pp. 242, 243. Concerning the expression, “about thirty years of age,” see on Luke 3:23.

Tiberius. See p. 246. Except for the mention of Augustus in ch. 2:1, references to “Caesar” throughout the Gospels always apply to Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius was noted for several successful military campaigns before his appointment as military governor of the provinces, being acclaimed “first soldier of the Empire.” He was known for strict discipline, leniency in taxation, and rigid economy in administration. He encouraged trade and communications. The Lake of Galilee was renamed the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1; etc.) in his honor. See *The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2*, *Palestine Under the Herodians*, *The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2*, *The Reigns of the Herods*, and *Palestine Under the Herodians*.

Pontius Pilate. Fifth in the series of procurators appointed by Rome following the deposition and banishment of Archelaus in A.D. 6 (see on Matt. 2:22). Pilate succeeded Valerius Gratus c. A.D. 26 and was recalled by Tiberius c. A.D. 36, for misconduct in office. See pp. 67, 68; see *The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2*, *The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2*, *The Reigns of the Herods*, *Palestine Under the Herodians*.

Governor. A “governor,” or procurator was an administrator of equestrian rank appointed by the emperor as “governor” of a subdivision of a province. At this time Judea was a subdivision of the Roman province of Syria. See p. 66; see on Matt. 27:2.

Herod. That is, Herod Antipas (see on Matt. 2:22), appointed by his father Herod the Great as tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea. The appointment was later confirmed by Augustus. His mother was a Samaritan. This was the Herod who married his niece Herodias, wife of his half brother (see *The Hasmonaeans and the Herods*), a union to which the Jews objected and for which Antipas was rebuked by John the Baptist (Luke 3:19, 20). Jesus aptly characterized him as “that fox” (ch. 13:31, 32) and referred to his evil influence as “the leaven of Herod” (Mark 8:15). It was to Herod Antipas that Jesus was sent by Pilate during the course of His trial (Luke 23:7–15). The name Antipas is the contracted form of Antipater, the name borne by his grandfather. Though only a tetrarch, he practically ruled as king from the death of his father, Herod the Great, until he was deposed about A.D. 39 (Josephus *Antiquities* xvii. 11, 4; *War* ii. 6. 3 [94, 95]). It seems that he was permitted the courtesy title of king (Mark 6:14). See pp. 64, 65; *The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2, Palestine Under the Herodians; Palestine During the Ministry of Jesus*.

Tetrarch of Galilee. On his coins Antipas refers to himself by the title “tetrarch.” At first a “tetrarch” was strictly the governor of the fourth part of a province, later of a subdivision of a province. Finally the term was used of any ruler less than a king in rank.

Philip. Herod Philip, son of Herod the Great (see *The Hasmonaeans and the Herods*), and probably the most fair and judicious of all of the sons of Herod the Great (Josephus *Antiquities* xvii. 4. 6). He married Salome, the daughter of Herodias and Herod Philip I, not long after the incident recorded in Mark 6:22–25 (Josephus *Antiquities* xvii. 5. 4). Philip was the first of the Herods to have figures of Augustus and Tiberius impressed on his coins. This the Jews considered idolatry, but fortunately for Philip his subjects were almost exclusively heathen. He rebuilt Caesarea Philippi at the foot of Mt. Hermon, naming it in honor of Tiberius Caesar and himself (Josephus *Antiquities* xviii. 2. 1; *War* ii. 9. 1 [168]). He rebuilt the city of Bethsaida Julias, which he named in honor of the daughter of Augustus. The latter city, at the north end of the Lake of Galilee, was the home of Peter, Andrew, and Philip (see John 1:44; 12:21). Philip ruled for 37 years, from 4 B.C. to A.D. 34. See *The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2, Palestine Under the Herodians*.

Ituraea. A region northeast of the Lake of Galilee, and east of Caesarea Philippi. Some have thought that the name is derived from Jetur, a son of Ishmael (see Gen. 25:15). See *Palestine During the Ministry of Jesus*.

Trachonitis. A region lying generally to the east of Ituraea. The name is evidently derived from the Gr. *trachus*, meaning a “rough” or “stony” area, which describes this region. Its soldiers are reputed to have been skilled archers.

Lysanias. Bible critics have long pointed to Luke’s mention of “Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene” as a gross chronological blunder. They note that the only ruler by that name in the vicinity designated was a son of Ptolemy, a king (not a tetrarch), whose capital was Chalcis in Coele-Syria, not in Abilene, and who reigned from 40–36 B.C. Although it must be admitted that there is no specific historical confirmation of Luke’s statement, several indirect references to a Lysanias corresponding to the Lysanias of Luke rather than the son of Ptolemy are strongly in Luke’s favor. Josephus refers to “Abila of Lysanias” (*Antiquities* xix. 5. 1) and to a tetrarchy of Lysanias (*Antiquities* xx. 7. 1; *War*

ii. 11. 5 [215]; 12. 8 [247]). A medal has been found designating a certain Lysanias as “tetrarch and high priest.” An inscription proves that the former Lysanias, son of Ptolemy, left children, one of whom might have been the Lysanias Luke mentions. Another inscription from the time of Tiberius speaks of a “tetrarch Lysanias.” Commenting on Luke’s supposed error, the *International Critical Commentary* observes that “such a mistake is very improbable; and the only difficulty about Luke’s statement is that we have no indisputable evidence of this tetrarch Lysanias.”

Abilene. A district between Damascus and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains.

2. Annas. Appointed high priest by Quirinius, governor of Syria, about A.D. 6 or 7; deposed A.D. 14 or 15 by Valerius Gratus (Josephus *Antiquities* xviii. 2. 2), who preceded Pilate as procurator of Judea. Annas had five sons, each of whom became high priest, as did also his son-in-law Caiaphas. The office was held by members of his family off and on for some 50 years after he himself was deposed. Though he no longer served as high priest during the ministry of Jesus, he was still considered the legitimate high priest by a majority of his countrymen (see Acts 4:6).

Caiaphas. Son-in-law of Annas. Appointed high priest by Valerius Gratus about A.D. 18 or 19, he continued in office till about A.D. 36. He was thus officially the high priest throughout the ministry of Jesus. He was a Sadducee, proud and cruel, overbearing and intolerant, but weak and vacillating in character (see John 11:49, 50; DA 539, 540, 703). See a Synopsis of the Life of Christ, The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2.

High priests. Caiaphas, officially high priest, and Annas, deposed by the Romans, still popularly honored as high priest (see John 18:13, 24; Acts 4:6). Originally the office of high priest was supposed to be hereditary and thus for life, but under Herodian and Roman rule high priests were often appointed and deposed in rapid succession. One of them held the office for but one day. From the accession of Herod the Great in 37 B.C. till the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, altogether 28 persons held the sacred office, their average term of office thus being about four years.

John. See on Matt. 3:1. Only Luke designates John as the son of Zacharias (see Luke 1:67). Apparently, the chronological data of Matt. 3:1 apply to the time when “the word of God came unto John,” meaning the time when God called him to his appointed work and gave him the specific “word,” or message, he was to proclaim. John may have commenced his ministry about the Passover season of the year A.D. 27 (see The Ministry of Our Lord).

The wilderness. See on Matt. 3:1. All three Synoptic Gospels refer to the fact that John was “in the wilderness,” by way of emphasizing the fact that he avoided places where men naturally congregate. The “word of God” probably came to John in the Wilderness of Judea, where much of his youth and young manhood had been spent (see on Luke 1:80), but he actually began his preaching and baptizing in Peraea, opposite Jericho (John 10:40; DA 132; see on Luke 1:80; John 1:28).

3. Country. Gr. *perichōros*, “a region round about” (see on Matt. 3:1, 5). John began his preaching and baptizing at Bethabara (Bethany), “beyond Jordan” (John 10:40). Later he is mentioned as being near Salim (see on John 3:23). Most of his ministry was conducted in the wilderness (DA 220).

Preaching. Gr. *kērussō*, “to proclaim.” John proclaimed the value and necessity of baptism and the forsaking of sin (see on Matt. 3:2, 6) as a necessary preparation for the coming of Messiah and His kingdom.

Baptism of repentance. See on Matt. 3:2, 6; cf. Isa. 1:16. “Repentance” as preached by John included far more than the confession of past sins (see Ps. 32:1). As his words of admonition make evident (Luke 3:9–14), “repentance” was to be followed by a new life in which the principles of righteousness already revealed in Scripture were to be put into practice (cf. Micah 6:8).

Remission. Gr. *aphesis*, “release,” or “forgiveness”; literally, “a sending away,” or “a dismissal.” Repentance, confession, and hence forgiveness, were to precede baptism, and were the first steps to be taken in preparing “the way of the Lord” and making “his paths straight,” in filling in the “valleys” and leveling the “mountains” of character (Luke 3:4, 5; cf. Matt. 3:6). Luke uses *aphesis* more often than all other NT writers combined.

4. Paths. Literally, “beaten tracks.”

5. Every valley. That is, every chasm or ravine, every rough place in the road. Luke alone of the gospel writers adds the details of vs. 5, 6, quoted from Isa. 40:4, 5. The work here described is an apt illustration of the transformation of character that accompanies genuine conversion. The high places of human pride and power were to be cast down (DA 215; see on Matt. 3:3).

6. See the salvation. Isa. 40:5, from which Luke is quoting, reads, “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” Upon beholding Jesus as an infant in the Temple, Simeon had exclaimed, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation” (Luke 2:30). Jesus came to earth to reveal the glory of the divine character, and it is as we behold “the glory of the Lord” that we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18).

7. Said he. Literally, “he kept saying” or “used to say,” meaning that John spoke again and again, no doubt giving emphasis to the same theme. Thus Luke’s report of the preaching of John is not to be taken as referring to a particular sermon delivered upon a certain occasion, but rather as a summary of the points that impressed those who listened, gleaned from various sermons (see on v. 18).

Multitude. Gr. *ochloi*, “crowds,” or “multitudes.”

Came forth. See on Matt. 3:5.

To be baptized. See on Matt. 3:6.

Generation. Gr. *gennēmata*, in this context, “brood.” These words were addressed specifically to the Pharisees and Sadducees (see on Matt. 3:7). The graphic imagery employed by John in his preaching, with its emphasis on common, everyday scenes of the countryside, is reminiscent of the messages of such OT prophets as Joel and Amos, and of the parables of Christ. Notice the rapid succession of figures of speech: workmen repairing a highway, a brood of vipers, fruits, an ax laid to the trunk of a tree, a slave boy removing his master’s sandals, a baptism of fire, and the threshing floor with its winnowing shovel, its growing pile of grain, and the chaff blown off to one side by the wind.

Who hath warned? With this scathing inquiry, the wilderness prophet questioned the motives of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Their motives and their ideals were foreign to the principles of the kingdom of heaven. In their present mood they would be no more welcome in this kingdom than a brood of snakes would be on the threshing floor at harvesttime (see Luke 3:17; cf. on Matt. 3:7).

The wrath to come. See on Matt. 3:7; cf. Luke 3:18.

8. Bring forth. See on Matt. 3:8.

Our father. In the Greek the word translated “father” is in the emphatic position.

9. The axe is laid. See on Matt. 3:10.

10. The people. Literally, “the crowds.”

Asked. Literally, “kept asking.” After each discourse the people made personal inquiry as to how to apply these principles to their own life problems. To each John gave appropriate counsel (see vs. 10–14).

What shall we do? The Spirit-inspired words of John the Baptist stirred up hearts until the people were eager to do something immediately by way of preparing for “the wrath to come” (v. 7) and the kingdom of God (v. 4). A sermon that does not stir men to some response has failed of its purpose. John was a powerful evangelist. After his appeal to the people to prepare for the coming of the Lord, they asked him for specific information as to how they might do so. In response, John pointed out to each individual or to each group their own besetting sins, thus indicating where each man should begin. Josephus wrote that John “was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism” (*Antiquities* xviii. 5. 2).

11. Coats. Gr. *chitōnes*, “tunics,” the inner garments worn next to the skin, as distinguished from the *himatia*, “cloaks,” or “mantles,” the outer garments worn over the *chitōnes*, the “tunics” or “shirts.”

Impart. Literally, “share.”

Meat. Gr. *brōmata*, foods in general, irrespective of vegetable or animal origin.

12. Publicans. Gr. *telōnai*, “tax collectors,” called by the Romans *publicani*. *Telōnai* is from *telos*, “tax,” and *ōneomai*, “to buy,” thus literally, “buyers of taxes.” Instead of having regular government employees appointed as revenue officers to collect fixed taxes, the Romans auctioned off the privilege of collecting revenues within a city or province. Only wealthy men were able to bid at the auction, for those who acquired the privilege were required to pay a stipulated sum into the royal treasury, irrespective of how much was actually collected, and to furnish security until the amount was paid. These *telōnai* usually followed the practice of subdividing, among subcontractors, the area assigned them, or of hiring agents to do the actual work of collecting taxes. In the NT “publicans” were the agents who actually collected taxes from the people, and were probably, with rare exceptions, Jews.

As representatives of a heathen conqueror, tax collectors were to the people a most painful reminder of the low state to which the Jewish nation had fallen. Adding to the disgrace of “publicans” in the sight of the Jews, was the unscrupulous practice followed by nearly all of these heartless parasites, of fleecing the people of every farthing that law or the ever-present Roman soldier might force from them. A Jew who became a “publican” was looked upon as a traitor to Israel, a lackey of the hated Romans. If it was wrong, from the Jewish point of view, to pay a tax, how much worse it must have been to collect taxes! A “publican” was therefore ostracized from society and excommunicated from the synagogue. He was looked upon and treated as a heathen dog, and tolerated only because the power of Rome was back of him (see on Mark 2:14; see p. 66).

Master. Literally, “teacher.” Like Christ, John not only preached but taught.

13. Exact no more. Or, “collect no more.” Neither John nor Christ condemned tax collecting as a profession. Jesus was a “friend” of tax collectors (see Matt. 11:19) and joined with them on social occasions (see Matt. 9:10–13). But both Jesus and John required fairness, honesty, and kindness of those among this class who applied for citizenship in the kingdom of heaven.

Appointed. They were to collect as much as was required of them, including a reasonable fee for their work. But there was no place for extortioners and heartless wolves in the kingdom of heaven.

14. Soldiers. Literally, “[ones] serving as soldiers,” possibly now on duty. John was probably preaching in Peraea (see on John 1:28), within the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas (see on Luke 3:1), and the soldiers who addressed John were probably Jews in the service of Herod. They may have been sent by Herod to keep watch on John, to prevent a popular uprising, or they may have come as police assistants to the tax collectors already mentioned. The word for “soldiers” may imply that the “soldiers” were there on business and not out of curiosity. Their question was apparently asked in all sincerity—Could they, as soldiers, qualify for the kingdom of heaven? In reply, John declared they could if they would comply with the conditions of citizenship. Had the soldiers been Romans it is likely that John would have told them to believe in the true God and become converts to the Jewish faith.

Demanded. Or, “asked” (see on v. 10).

What shall we do? In the Greek “we” is emphatic, as if the soldiers had said: “And we, what shall we do?” This emphasis may imply that the soldiers were in the company of the tax collectors, who had just spoken to John (vs. 12, 13).

Do violence to no man. That is to say, “Do not extort money from anyone by intimidation.” Misuse of their power as soldiers was the besetting sin over which these men must have victory in order to be ready for the coming Prince. John did not condemn the soldiers as such, but pointed out that they must exercise their power with justice and mercy.

Wages. Gr. *opsōnia*, “soldiers’ pay,” or “wages.” Paul uses *opsōnia* in Rom. 6:23 for the “wages” of sin. He asks the people of the church at Corinth, “Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges [Gr. *opsōnia*]?” (1 Cor. 9:7). The soldiers who came to John the Baptist were apparently mercenaries and not conscripts.

15. Were in expectation. Gr. *prosdokaō*, “to expect,” “to look for,” or “to wait for.” The same Greek word is used of the lame man sitting at the gate called Beautiful, who looked up to Peter and John, “expecting to receive something of them” (see Acts 3:2–5). The imagination of the throngs of people who heard John was fired with eager anticipation that the Messianic prophecies to which he referred were on the verge of fulfillment. Like the two disciples to whom Christ appeared on the Emmaus road, whose hearts burned within them (see Luke 24:32), the people ardently hoped that Israel’s deliverer might soon appear. John’s message gripped the popular imagination in a way that stirred the nation and reached to the remotest village and hamlet.

All men. The universal excitement was at fever pitch. Josephus says that the crowds that gathered to hear John “were very greatly moved by hearing his words,” and that Herod Antipas “feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do any thing he

should advise)” (*Antiquities* xviii. 5. 2). John’s appointed task was to rouse men’s minds from the slumber of centuries, to fire their hearts with hope that a new day was about to dawn, and to impel them to prepare for the Coming One—the Desire of all ages. In this work he was eminently successful. In fact, he stirred even the Jewish leaders to investigate his message (see John 1:19–25). “All men” knew about John, and all who possibly could do so came to hear him.

Mused. Literally, “were reasoning,” or “were deliberating” (see on ch. 1:29). The people wondered what the result of all this excitement would be.

Whether he were the Christ. The Jewish leaders often demanded miracles of Jesus as evidence of His Messiahship (see on Matt. 12:38; 16:1; etc.). However, “John did no miracle” (John 10:41). His rude garb bore no resemblance to royalty. He was, in fact, of the tribe of Levi (see Luke 1:5), not of the tribe of Judah, as the prophets had said the Christ would be (see on Matt. 1:1). Nevertheless, the people were ready to accept him as the Messiah should he put forth the claim, and even the representatives of the Sanhedrin wondered whether he might be the Promised One (see John 1:19–21). The Jewish nation could have paid John no higher compliment; it could have borne no more eloquent testimony to the power of his message. Indeed, his proclamation of the coming of the Messiah was so effective that the people mistook him for the Messiah Himself!

16. Baptize you with water. See on Matt. 3:11.

Latchet. See on Mark 1:7.

Shoes. See on Matt. 3:11.

Not worthy to unloose. See on Mark 1:7.

Baptize you. See on Matt. 3:11.

17. Whose fan. See on Matt. 3:12.

18. Many other things. This implies that the items mentioned constitute a summary of the preaching of John the Baptist rather than a verbatim report of any one sermon (see on v. 7).

19. Herod the tetrarch. [*Imprisonment of John*, Luke 3:19, 20=Matt. 14:3–5. Major comment: Luke. See Judean Ministry from First Passover A.D. 28; The Ministry of Our Lord.] Luke makes reference to the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist at this point in order to complete his account concerning John before proceeding to narrate the ministry of Christ. It seems that John was not imprisoned until a number of months, perhaps a year or more, after the baptism of Jesus (DA 214; cf. p. 213), at approximately the time of the Passover of A.D. 29. He remained in prison until the early spring of A.D. 30, and was beheaded a few weeks before the Passover of that year (see DA 360, 361, 364). See p. 64; the Opening of the Galilean Ministry, The Ministry of Our Lord; Additional Note on Luke 4.

Reproved. According to Josephus the Jews as a whole also took exception to this marriage (*Antiquities* xviii. 5. 4).

Herodias. A daughter of Aristobulus, and granddaughter of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas divorced his own wife, a daughter of King Aretas of Arabia, in order to marry Herodias (Josephus *Antiquities* xviii. 5. 1). See on v. 1.

Philip’s. This Herod (see The Hasmonaeans and the Herods) was Herod Antipas’ half brother, a son of Herod the Great and Mariamne (II)— not Herod Philip the Tetrarch (see on v. 1), a son of Herod the Great and Cleopatra. Salome was the daughter of this

Herod and Herodias. He had been disinherited by his father Herod the Great and lived a private life, first in Jerusalem and later in Rome.

20. Added. This was a notable addition to the other “evils” of Herod (see v. 19).

Shut up John. John was imprisoned in the early spring of A.D. 29, after a ministry of about two years (see The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2, The Reigns of the Herods, The Ministry of Our Lord; see on Matt 3:1). The fact that he was imprisoned by Herod Antipas implies that John was preaching on the Peraea side of the Jordan River at the time of his arrest (see on Luke 3:3).

It appeared to Herod that the people were ready to do whatever John told them to do, and Herod feared that a popular uprising might be the result (*Antiquities* xviii. 5. 2; DA 360). Josephus does not mention the matter of Herodias in connection with John’s imprisonment, though he elsewhere mentions Herodias’ marriage to Antipas (*Antiquities* xviii. 5. 4). Thus Josephus probably records Herod’s publicly alleged reason for imprisoning John. It would be unlikely that Herod would announce as his reason for so doing the private matter of Herodias, of which the Jews as a whole disapproved. See DA 214.

Prison. According to Josephus (*Antiquities* xviii. 5. 2) this was the fortress of Machaerus, in Peraea, east of the Dead Sea. The site of Machaerus was discovered in 1807, and ruins of the dungeons can still be seen. However, in view of the sequence of events in Mark 6:17–30 (cf. DA 222), certain scholars think that the birthday celebration may have been held in Tiberias, and therefore question the accuracy of Josephus’ statement.

21. All the people. [The Baptism, Luke 3:21–23^a=Matt. 3:13–17==Mark 1:9–11. Major comment: Matthew.] A common Jewish figure of hyperbole, which probably here was meant to include a decided majority of those who listened. At least the Pharisees and Sadducees declined baptism (Luke 7:30, 33; Matt. 21:25, 32).

Praying. Only Luke records that Jesus prayed as He came forth from the river. It is appropriate that Luke, who so often mentions Jesus in the act of prayer, should here note this detail.

22. In a bodily shape. Only Luke qualifies the dove thus.

My beloved Son. See on Matt. 3:17. Codex Bezae adds, “today I have begotten thee.” While here affirming the true deity of Jesus, Luke proceeds at once to prove His true humanity (vs. 23–38). Matthew opens his account of the gospel story by presenting the genealogy of Jesus (see on Matt. 1:1); Luke reserves his genealogy for the moment when Jesus took up His life mission. Moses similarly gives his own pedigree after recording his first public appearance as spokesman for God and leader of Israel (see Ex. 6:16–20).

23. Began. Gr. *archomai*, “to begin.” The verb appears also in Matt. 4:17; Mark 4:1; Luke 3:8; Acts 1:1, 22; 10:37; etc. A problem arises in connection with the form here used, *archomenos*. Whether *archomenos* refers to the “beginning” of the 30th year of Jesus’ life, or to the commencement of His ministry, is not clear. Tyndale’s translation of the first part of Luke 3:23 reads: “Jesus was aboute thirty yere of age when he beganne.” The Cranmer Bible of 1539 adopted a new translation, “Jesus him selfe beganne to be aboute thirty yere of age,” and this was followed by the KJV. Inasmuch as the context (vs. 1–22) is concerned with the baptism of Jesus, with which His public ministry began, many have concluded that *archomenos* must refer to His ministry (see on Mark 1:1; cf.

Acts 1:22; 10:37, 38). They consequently add expressions such as “to teach” (RV) or “his ministry” (RSV) after *archomenos*. See on Luke 1:57; 2:42.

About thirty years. Luke does not commit himself as to the precise age of Jesus at the time of His baptism, but rather emphasizes the fact that He was “*about* thirty years of age.” So far as Luke’s statement goes, this might be a year or two more or less than precisely 30. Among the Jews the age of 30 was generally considered to be the time when a man arrived at full maturity and was consequently eligible for the responsibilities of public life. See a Synopsis of the Life of Christ, The Chronology of Luke 3:1, 2.

If the birth of Jesus occurred in the autumn of 5 B.C., as seems probable (see on ch. 2:6, 8), His 30th year, by the Jewish method of reckoning (see on ch. 2:42), would have begun in the autumn of A.D. 25 and ended in the autumn of A.D. 26 (see on v. 1). This is fully in harmony with Luke’s more or less general statement that Jesus was “*about*” 30 years of age, and with all known chronological data pertaining to Christ’s life. It would seem, then, that Luke is not here making a precise chronological statement, but is merely noting that Jesus was of mature age at the time of His baptism and the commencement of His public ministry.

Was supposed. [*The Human Ancestry of Jesus*, Luke 3:23b–38=Matt. 1:1–17. Major comment: Matthew and Luke.] Jesus was “legally considered” or “popularly believed” to be the son of Joseph (see John 8:41). In the official records in the Temple at Jerusalem, Jesus was registered as the first-born of Mary and Joseph (see Luke 2:21; DA 52). Joseph’s prompt action when directed by the angel to take Mary as his wife no doubt protected both her own and the Child’s good name (see on Matt. 1:24). According to the official records and before the law Jesus was the son of Joseph.

The son. For the importance and value of the ancestral record of Jesus to people of NT times, see on Matt. 1:1. The genealogy as given by Luke differs in several important respects from that given by Matthew, and these differences confront modern readers of the Bible with what is, admittedly, a problem of no small difficulty. This problem consists essentially in the fact that although both genealogical lists purport to give the ancestry of Joseph, they differ between themselves, not only as to the number of ancestors listed within a given period of time, but also as to who most of these ancestors were. The chief points of difference between the two lists may be stated as follows:

1. Luke lists 41 descendants of David who were ancestors of Jesus; Matthew, 26.
2. With the exception of Salathiel, Zerubbabel, and Joseph the husband of Mary, the two lists are altogether different for David’s descendants.
3. The two genealogies converge briefly, with Salathiel and Zerubbabel, but Matthew identifies Salathiel as the son of Jeconiah; Luke lists him as the son of Neri.
4. Matthew identifies Joseph as the son of Jacob; Luke, as the son of Heli.

At first these differences appear to constitute major discrepancies between the lists given by Matthew and Luke. The problem is still further complicated by the fact that nothing whatever is known concerning 60 of the 64 persons named in both lists, and that information concerning the other four is at best meager. This absence of information makes a positive reconciliation of the differences between the two lists practically impossible. Fortunately, however, enough is known of ancient Jewish customs and modes of thought and expression to provide an entirely plausible explanation of each point of difference, and thus to demonstrate that the discrepancies may reasonably be considered apparent rather than real. The various points of difference will be considered in order:

1. As noted, Matthew assigns 26 generations, averaging about 37 years each, to the period of time from the death of David to the birth of Christ; Luke has 41 generations, averaging about 24 years each. According to the tentative chronology followed by this commentary, David died in the year 971 B.C. (see Vol. II, pp. 77, 143) and Christ was born 5 B.C. (see Vol. V, p. 242), an interval of about 966 years. In part, it may be possible to account for the great difference between 26 and 41 generations by assuming that each ancestor of Jesus in the line traced by Luke was, on the average, about 13 years younger at the birth of his successor than the average of Matthew's line. But the difference is too great to be accounted for altogether on this basis. In view of the fact that Matthew has clearly omitted at least four genealogical links during that part of the 966 years where a comparison with OT lists can be made (see on Matt. 1:8, 11, 17), it is entirely possible that he may have omitted at least 11 from the more obscure period between the Testaments. It may be observed, also, that an average span of 24 years between a man's own birth and that of his successor is far more probable than 37 years. This observation tends to confirm the 37 generations of Luke and the probability that Matthew arrived at 24 by the intentional omission of about 15 names from his list (see on Matt. 1:8, 11, 17).

2. Except for Salathiel, Zerubbabel, and Joseph the husband of Mary, the genealogical lists given by Matthew and Luke obviously trace the ancestry of Jesus back to David through two entirely different lines of descent. From David to the Captivity, Matthew follows the ruling line of the royal family, and we assume that the same is true of those listed from the Captivity onward (see on Matt. 1:17). Luke apparently follows a nonruling branch of the royal line back to Nathan, another son of David by Bath-sheba (1 Chron. 3:5; see on Luke 3:31). Intermarriage within the limits of the royal family easily accounts for the fact that Christ's ancestry can be traced back to David through two almost entirely distinct family lines. This does not, however, account for the fact that these two lines are given (see No. 4, below).

3. For a discussion of the problem presented by the convergence of the two lists in Salathiel and Zerubbabel, after whom they again diverge, see on v. 27.

4. See below under "Of Joseph" and "Son of Heli."

Of Joseph. Like Matthew (see on Matt. 1:16), Luke carefully avoids stating that Jesus was the son of Joseph. The parenthetical expression "as was supposed" not only implies the absence of direct blood relationship, but suggests as well that legally and popularly Jesus was considered the son of Joseph.

Among the Hebrew people the terms for "father" and "son," "mother" and "daughter," "brother" and "sister," etc., were commonly used to include more distant relationship than the words imply in the English (see on Gen. 29:12; Num. 10:29; Deut. 15:2; 1 Chron. 2:7). Hence "son," for example, as used in the Bible, may denote relationship by natural birth (whether immediate or remote), by adoption, by levirate marriage (see on Deut. 25:5-9), or simply by character (see 2 Tim. 1:2).

Son of Heli. Or, "son of Eli," Heli being from the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name rendered in English as "Eli." Obviously Joseph the husband of Mary could not be the literal son of both Heli, as here, and of Jacob, as in Matt. 1:16. Two plausible explanations have been proposed, either of which is fully in harmony with known Jewish customs. According to one explanation, both lists give the ancestry of Joseph, the one by blood descent and the other by adoption or by levirate marriage. According to the other

explanation, Matthew gives the ancestry of Joseph, and Luke gives that of Mary, through her father.

Those who consider both lists as representing the lineage of Joseph, explain that one list gives his actual blood descent, and the other, his descent by adoption into a related family line. If Joseph was literally the “son of Jacob,” as in Matthew, he must have become the “son of Heli” in some other than a literal sense. If Heli had no natural heir, he could have adopted Joseph, through whom, according to Jewish custom, both lines might be preserved. According to the second explanation, Mary was the only child of Heli, and by marrying her Joseph became the legal son and heir of Heli in harmony with the provisions of the levirate marriage law as given in the time of Moses (see on Deut. 25:5–9; Matt. 22:24).

24. Matthat. See on Matt. 1:15. Nothing more is known concerning the persons named from Matthat in Luke 3:24 to Rhesa in v. 27 than that they were ancestors of Jesus. They are not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible because of the fact that the OT canon does not extend much beyond the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity.

27. Zorobabel. That is, Zerubbabel. Luke calls Zerubbabel the son of Salathiel, and Salathiel the son of Neri. Matthew also calls Zerubbabel the son of Salathiel, but calls Salathiel the son of Jeconiah (see on Matt. 1:12). While there may have been more than one Zerubbabel during this period (the name probably means “a shoot of Babylon” or “begotten in Babylon”) with a father named Salathiel, such a possibility is almost universally discounted. Thus the problem here raised is common to both general theories advanced in explanation of the differences between the two genealogical lists (see on Luke 3:23).

Various solutions to the problem of Salathiel’s parentage have been proposed. Some suggest that Salathiel was the literal son of Neri, but the “son” of Jeconiah [Jehoiachin; see on 1 Chron. 3:16] by adoption. Others suggest that Salathiel, though the son of Neri, became the legal successor to Jeconiah, possibly owing to the extinction of Jeconiah’s family (see on Jer. 22:30), or for some other reason. Still others suggest that a daughter of Jeconiah married Neri, and that Salathiel was thus the son of Neri and the grandson of Jeconiah, but called “son” of Jeconiah according to Jewish custom. As to Zerubbabel’s parentage, both Luke and Matthew call him the son of Salathiel (Shealtiel), in agreement with Ezra 3:2; 5:2; Neh. 12:1; and Haggai 1:1, though the Masoretic text of 1 Chron. 3:19 calls Zerubbabel the son of Pedaiah (see on 1 Chron. 3:19; Ezra 2:2). However, the LXX of 1 Chron. 3:19 lists Salathiel as the father of Zerubbabel, and it is apparent that Luke here follows the LXX whenever it provides information pertinent to his genealogical list (see on Luke 3:36).

Neri. The persons named from Neri in v. 27 to Mattatha in v. 31 are not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. The period of time covered by this group extends from the Babylonian captivity back through the time of the divided kingdom to Solomon.

31. Nathan. Nathan was a son of David and Bath-sheba, born in Jerusalem (see on 2 Sam. 5:14).

David. See on Matt. 1:1, 6. For the names from David to Abraham listed in Luke 3:31–34 see on Matt. 1:2–6.

34. Thara. That is, Terah, the father of Abraham (see on Gen. 11:26–32). The difference in the spelling of the names from Terah to Mahalaleel (Maleleel) is due to the fact that in the OT these names are transliterated into English directly from the Hebrew,

whereas in the NT they are transliterated from the Greek, which in turn was transliterated from the Hebrew.

Nachor. That is, Nahor, Abraham's grandfather (see on Gen. 11:22).

35. Saruch. That is, Serug, Abraham's great-grandfather (see on Gen. 11:20).

Ragau. That is, Reu (see on Gen. 11:18).

Phalec. That is, Peleg (see on Gen. 11:16).

Heber. That is, Eber (see on Gen. 10:21; 11:14).

Sala. That is, Salah (see on Gen. 11:13).

36. Cainan. The name Cainan appears here and in the LXX of Gen. 11:12, 13 and 1 Chron. 1:18, but not in the Masoretic text. The fact that the Greek transliteration of these Hebrew names in Luke 3:34–38 is identical with that of the LXX in Gen. 5:5–32; 11:10–24 implies that Luke probably followed the LXX for this portion of his genealogy. This possibility is confirmed by the further fact that Luke includes Cainan here, between Salah and Arphaxad.

Arphaxad. See on Gen. 10:22; 11:12.

Sem. That is, Shem, the second son of Noah (see on Gen. 5:32; 11:10, 11).

Noe. That is, Noah (see on Gen. 5:29).

Lamech. See on Gen. 5:25.

37. Mathusala. That is, Methuselah (see on Gen. 4:18; 5:25).

Enoch. See on Gen. 5:22, 24.

Jared. See on Gen. 4:18.

Maleleel. That is, Mahalaleel (see on Gen. 4:18).

Cainan. See Gen. 5:9. This patriarch, the son of Enos, is not to be confused with the Cainan of Luke 3:36, who is not mentioned in the Masoretic text of the OT (see on v. 36).

38. Enos. See on Gen. 4:26.

Seth. The third son of Adam and Eve (see on Gen. 4:25).

Adam. For the meaning of the name see on Gen. 1:26; 3:17; Num. 24:3. Luke begins his genealogy with the supernatural birth of the second or "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45) and now closes it with a reference to the creation of the first Adam.

Son of God. Luke here affirms his faith in God as the Creator of man and the Author of life, the One that "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men" (Acts 17:25, 26). In the beginning man was created in the image of God. Through faith in Jesus Christ it is our privilege to be created anew in His likeness (see 2 Cor. 5:17).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–18DA 97–108

7 PK 140

10, 11 DA 107

13 DA 553

19 EW 154

21, 22 DA 109–113

22 EW 153, 156

23 4T 109

38 Ed 33, 130; PP 45

CHAPTER 4

1 *The temptation and fasting of Christ. 13 He overcometh the devil: 14 beginneth to preach. 16 The people of Nazareth admire his gracious words. 33 He cureth one possessed of a devil, 38 Peter's mother in law, 40 and divers other sick persons. 41 The devils acknowledge Christ, and are reproved for it. 43 He preacheth through the cities.*

1. Full of the Holy Ghost. [*The Temptation, Luke 4:1–13=Matt. 4:1–11=Mark 1:12, 13. Major comment: Matthew.*] A reference to the reception of the Holy Spirit at the time of the baptism (see ch. 3:21, 22).

Led. The tense of the Greek verb implies that the leading of the Holy Spirit here referred to was not limited to the journey into the wilderness, but continued during His sojourn there.

2. Forty days. Matthew makes it clear that the three major temptations came at the close of the 40 days (see on ch. 4:2, 3), a fact clear also from the latter part of Luke 4:2. When Jesus first entered the wilderness He was shut in, as it were, by the Father's glory, and when the glory departed He was left alone to battle temptation (DA 118). Satan's temptations continued during the entire 40 days of Jesus' fast; the three mentioned in vs. 3–13 represented the climax of the temptations and came at the close of the period (see 2SP 90).

3. This stone. Perhaps Satan pointed to a particular stone, a stone whose shape may have resembled that of a flat, round Oriental loaf (see on Matt. 4:3).

5. Moment. Gr. *stigmē*, from *stizō*, literally, “to tattoo”; that is, “to prick,” or “to puncture,” hence “a point of time.” We might say, “in a second” or “in a tick of the clock.” Tyndale's translation reads “in the twinkling of an eye.”

6. Delivered unto me. That is, by Adam when he sinned. After the Fall Satan styled himself the “prince” of this world (DA 114), forgetting that Adam held title to it only by virtue of allegiance to his Creator. Satan implied that Adam had chosen him as his sovereign and representative in heaven. The emphasis here given in the Greek to the pronouns by their position is revealing: “To *thee* will I give ... for to *me* it hath been delivered ... *Thou*, therefore, if thou wilt worship *me*,” etc. One can almost see Satan's emphatic gestures as he makes this proposal.

10. To keep thee. Gr. *diaphulassō*, “to guard thee carefully” (see on Matt. 4:6).

13. All the temptation. Literally, “every temptation.” See on Matt. 4:11.

For a season. That is, until a convenient time, when another opportunity might present itself. From earliest years Christ was continually assailed by the tempter (DA 71, 116).

14. Power. [*Opening of the Galilean Ministry, Luke 4:14, 15=Matt. 4:12=Mark 1:14, 15. Major comment: Matthew.*] Gr. *dunamis*, “power,” whence the English word “dynamite” is derived (see on ch. 1:35). The Holy Spirit is the active agent in both creation (see Gen. 1:2) and re-creation (see John 3:5). The kingdom of God was to come “with power” (see Mark 9:1). The power of the Holy Ghost overshadowed Mary at the moment of the incarnation (see Luke 1:35). Through the Holy Spirit she received wisdom to cooperate with Heaven in the character development of Jesus (DA 69). But at the time of His baptism the Holy Spirit descended upon Christ in a special way and filled Him with divine power for the accomplishment of His mission (see on John 3:34). Later, the disciples were promised “power, after that the Holy Ghost” should “come upon” them—

power to bear witness to the glorious message of a crucified and risen Saviour (see Acts 1:8; cf. ch. 2:1–4).

Fame. Gr. *phēme* = , “report,” or “fame”; from *phēmi*, “to say.” The “fame” of a person consists in what is said about him. The “fame” of Jesus grew as the news concerning Him spread by word of mouth, “through all the region round about.”

15. He taught. According to the Greek, “he continued teaching.” Teaching was the customary manner in which Christ imparted truth. In present-day definition preaching is a more formal presentation of truth; teaching, the less formal. Teaching tends to be more effective than preaching, for the listeners are participants, whereas in preaching they are primarily passive listeners. From time to time Jesus delivered more formal discourses, such as the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Bread of Life. But even concerning the Sermon on the Mount the record states, “And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying” (Matt. 5:2). Happy is the preacher who can give to his preaching the added quality of teaching.

Their synagogues. That is, the synagogues of Galilee. For a description of the synagogue and its services see pp. 56-58. Luke probably mentions the synagogue teaching of Jesus in anticipation of the incident he is about to narrate (vs. 16–30). Immediately following the synagogue incident at Nazareth he relates another that occurred in the synagogue in Capernaum (vs. 31–37), and observes again that Jesus “preached in the synagogues of Galilee” (v. 44).

Glorified. Or, “honored” or “praised.” Galilee was a more favorable field for the Saviour’s work than Judea (DA 232). Wherever Jesus went, “the common people heard him gladly” (Mark 12:37).

16. To Nazareth. [*First Rejection at Nazareth, Luke 4:16–30.* See Early Galilean Ministry; The Duration of Christ’s Ministry, Opening of the Galilean Ministry, The Ministry of Our Lord. See Additional Note at end of chapter.] This was Christ’s first visit to Nazareth since He had left the carpenter shop in the autumn of 27 A.D. to take up His public ministry (DA 236). It was now probably the late spring of A.D. 29, and nearly half the period of His public ministry was in the past. A year later, probably in the early spring of A.D. 30, Jesus paid His next, and final (DA 241), visit to this city. The first visit is recorded only in vs. 16–30; for the second, see on Mark 6:1–6. Here in Nazareth the mother, brothers, and sisters of Jesus still lived (DA 236), and were no doubt among the worshipers in the synagogue on this particular Sabbath.

Brought up. See on Matt. 2:23; Luke 2:51, 52.

His custom. Literally, “according to what was customary to him.” Christ was in the habit of attending the regular synagogue services on the Sabbath day. Often as a youth in this very synagogue at Nazareth He had been called upon to read the lesson from the prophets, and from His intimate knowledge of the Scriptures He had drawn forth lessons that thrilled the hearts of the worshipers (DA 74; cf. 70). It seems that Jesus often made use of the opportunity afforded by the assembling of the people at the synagogues of Judea and Galilee, to teach them (see Matt. 4:23; 12:9; 13:54; Mark 1:21; 6:2; John 18:20; etc.; see on Luke 4:15), even as Paul later did in foreign lands (Acts 13:14, 15, 42).

The synagogue. For a description of the ancient synagogue and its services see pp. 56-58. For a description of the ruins of a synagogue at Capernaum see on John 6:59.

On the sabbath day. Luke's simple statement that Jesus habitually attended the sacred synagogue services on the Sabbath day, which he specifically identifies as the seventh day of the week (chs. 23:56 to 24:1), makes clear the duty of the Christian who loves his Master and would follow in His steps (see John 14:15; 1 Peter 2:21). The fact that Christ, when here on earth, personally observed the same day of the week as did the Jews, is also evidence that time had not been lost since the giving of the law at Sinai, or for that matter since creation. Christ is "Lord also of the sabbath" (Mark 2:28); that is, He made it (Gen. 2:1–3; cf. Mark 2:27) and claims it as His day. His example in observing it is therefore a perfect pattern for the Christian to follow, both as to the time and as to the manner of its observance. Furthermore, there can be no question but that the week as we have it now has come down in unbroken sequence from the time of Christ, and that observance of the seventh day of the week today is observance of the Sabbath as Christ kept it. From that day to this there have been millions of Jews scattered throughout the civilized world, and it would have been impossible for all of them simultaneously to make identically the same mistake in figuring the seventh day of the week.

Stood up. Reverence for the written Word required that the one reading it publicly remain standing. The Law and the Prophets were read thus, but not the Writings, which did not then enjoy equal status (see Vol. I, p. 37; Vol. V, pp. 57, 58).

To read. Gr. *anaginōskō*, a common term in the NT for the public reading of the Scriptures (see Acts 13:27; 15:21; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27), but which may also refer to private reading (see Matt. 24:15; Luke 10:26; Acts 8:28). It was to be expected that Jesus would be asked to read the Scriptures and to preach a sermon when He returned to Nazareth, a task any qualified Israelite, even those under age, might be called on to perform. He had often been asked to do so as a child (DA 74), and His reputation as a preacher in Judea (see John 3:26; DA 181) now made His fellow townsmen eager to hear what He had to say. The one who read the selection from the Prophets was also expected to give the sermon.

17. Delivered unto him. That is, by the deacon, or *chazzan*, whose duty it was to remove the sacred scrolls from the ark and hand them to the reader, and to return them to the ark at the close of the reading (see p. 56). Thus in harmony with synagogue ritual, the *chazzan* took the roll of the Prophets from the ark, removed the cover and handed it, unopened, to Jesus. It is apparent that Jesus not only spoke the common language of the people but was also well read in Hebrew—by that time a more or less dead language except for religious purposes. The lesson for the day was always read in Hebrew.

Esaias. That is, Isaiah. It is thought that in the time of Christ the one asked to read the lesson from the Prophets and to preach the sermon, might choose the section to be read. Jesus specifically asked for the roll of the prophet Isaiah (see Additional Note at the end of this chapter).

Opened. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading "unfolded," or "unrolled."

Book. Gr. *biblion*, "a book," or "a scroll." The English "Bible" comes from this word. This "book" was a scroll. See p. 113.

Found the place. Jesus continued unrolling the scroll from the roller until He came to the passage He desired to read, at the same time rolling up, with the other hand, the

portion passed by (see the picture of the Dead Sea Isaiah scroll, Vol. I, p. 33). Isaiah 61:1, 2 would be almost at the end of the scroll.

Where it was written. The quotation as given by Luke agrees with the LXX of Isa. 61:1, 2^a, except for the omission of the clause, in many ancient manuscripts, “to heal the brokenhearted,” and the insertion of the clause, “to set at liberty them that are bruised,” by a paraphrase of Isa. 58:6. Luke probably had the LXX of his day before him as he wrote (see on ch. 3:36). It was a common Jewish practice thus to link various passages of Scripture together (see on Mark 1:2).

18. Spirit of the Lord. For the role of the Holy Spirit in the earthly ministry of Jesus see on Matt. 3:16; 4:1.

Is upon me. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at the time of His baptism to empower Him for His earthly ministry (see Luke 3:21, 22; John 1:32; Acts 10:38).

Anointed. Gr. *chriō*, from which the title Christ, the Anointed (one), is derived (see on Matt. 1:1). In its Messianic setting, this passage might be freely translated thus: “He hath made me the Christ,” or, “He hath made me the Messiah” (see on Isa. 61:1).

The gospel. See on Mark 1:1.

The poor. The poor were usually at the mercy of unscrupulous officials, businessmen, and neighbors. Further, it was generally supposed that the suffering of poverty was due to the curse of God—that their unfortunate state was their own fault. Few felt sympathetic toward them in their unhappy plight. Jesus’ marked love for the poor was one of the great evidences of His Messiahship to which He called the attention of John the Baptist when the latter was languishing in prison (see Matt. 11:5). Those who have little of this world’s goods are frequently conscious of their needs and of their reliance upon God, and thus frequently susceptible to the preaching of the gospel. The gospel of Jesus means relief for the poor, light for the ignorant, alleviation of distress for the suffering, and emancipation for the slaves of sin.

Any person who took an interest in relieving the poor was thought to be particularly righteous, and almsgiving became synonymous with righteousness (see on Acts 10:2–4; etc.). It was often the case that almsgiving was practiced, not out of sympathetic interest in helping the poor, but from a desire to earn righteousness (see on Matt. 6:1–4; John 12:5). However, genuine, sympathetic concern for the feelings and needs of our fellow men is one of the best evidences of “pure religion” (see James 1:27), of sincere conversion (1 John 3:10, 14), of love for God (see 1 John 3:17–19; 4:21), and of readiness for entrance into the kingdom of heaven (see Matt. 25:34–46).

Perhaps Jesus was thinking also of the “poor in spirit” (see on Matt. 5:3)—those in need of spiritual things rather than material things. It is the “poor in spirit,” those who sense their spiritual need, to whom Christ promised the infinite resources of the kingdom of heaven. In fact, there is little use in preaching the gospel to any but those who feel their need of something more than this world has to offer (cf. Rev. 3:17, 18). It is those who are rich in faith, who hear and heed the gospel message (see on Matt. 7:24), who are to be “heirs of the kingdom” (see James 2:5). It is “treasure in heaven” that counts (see Luke 12:21, 33; 18:22).

The brokenhearted. Including, of course, those who are suffering bitter disappointment, but referring particularly to those who are “brokenhearted” and repentant over sin. The “brokenhearted” here referred to may be compared with those who “mourn”

over sin, that is, those who are contrite of heart (see on Matt. 5:4; cf. Rom. 7:24). Jesus came to mend broken hearts.

Captives. This does not refer to literal captives, but to those who have been captives of Satan in body, mind, and spirit (see Rom. 6:16). Jesus did not release John the Baptist from prison. These “captives” are “spirits” that languish in the “prison” house of Satan (see 1 Peter 3:19), caught in “the snare of the devil” and “taken captive by him at his will” (see 2 Tim. 2:26).

Blind. Not only the literally blind, but also those spiritually blind (see Matt. 15:14; 23:16–19, 26; John 9:39–41).

To set at liberty. A paraphrase of the words of Isa. 58:6 (see on Luke 4:17). In the reading of the Prophets, but not the Law, it was permissible to skip from one passage to another.

Them that are bruised. The scripture quoted speaks of letting “the oppressed go free,” again essentially in the spiritual sense. The same Hebrew word translated “oppressed” in Isa. 58:6 is given as “bruised” in Isa. 42:3, where it is prophesied of Christ that “a bruised reed shall he not break.” In Isa. 42:4 the word is translated “discouraged.” Jesus came to free men from the heavy burdens of sin, and from the oppressive rabbinical restrictions placed upon the Jews (see Matt. 23:4; cf. ch. 11:28–30).

19. Acceptable year. That is, the gospel age, when those who feel their spiritual need (the poor in spirit), those with contrite hearts (the brokenhearted), those who have been captives of sin and blinded to spiritual things, and those who have been wounded and crushed by the evil one, may expect release from sin. The “acceptable year of the Lord” is reminiscent of the year of jubilee, when slaves were freed, debts were canceled, and entailed land was turned back to its original owner (see on Lev. 25:10, 15, 24).

At this point Jesus ended His reading of Isa. 61:1, 2. The next clause, which was to the patriotic Jew the climax of the entire passage—“the day of vengeance of our God”—He did not read. The Jews fondly believed that salvation was for them and retribution for the Gentiles (see Ps. 79:6). The Jewish idea that salvation was a matter of nationality rather than a personal submission to God blinded the people to the true nature of Christ’s mission and led them to reject Him. They expected the Messiah to appear as a powerful prince at the head of a mighty army, to vanquish all their oppressors and bring the world under Israel’s power (DA 30, 236).

This fundamental misconception arose from the fact that the Jews deliberately overlooked those prophecies that spoke of a suffering Messiah and misapplied those that pointed to the glory of His second coming (DA 30). It was pride, prejudice, and preconceived opinion that led them into this state of spiritual blindness (see DA 65, 212, 242). They were blind to the fact that it is not the amount of light that shines upon a man that counts, but the use made of that light. They delighted to dwell on the idea that the judgment of God was reserved for others, and may have been surprised when Jesus did not so much as mention this. When, in His sermon, Jesus extolled the faith of the heathen, thus implying the Jews’ own lack of it, the audience was beside itself with resentment and fury (see vs. 25–29).

For further comment on the false concepts of the Jews concerning the Messianic kingdom see on Matt. 3:7; 4:9; 5:2, 3; Luke 1:68. For comment on the true nature of the kingdom see on Matt. 3:2, 3; 4:17; 5:2, 3; Mark 3:14.

20. Closed the book. That is, by rolling up the book of Isaiah on its single roller (see on v. 17).

Minister. Gr. *hupēretēs*, literally, “underrower,” hence anyone who serves with his hands, “a servant.” Here Luke doubtless refers to the *chazzan*, or deacon, who returned the scroll to the ark (see on v. 17).

Sat down. Custom required a standing posture for the public reading of the Law and the Prophets. But for the sermon, which followed the reading, the speaker was seated in a special seat sometimes called “the chair of Moses.” This chair stood on a raised platform near the lectern. Often, perhaps usually, Christ sat while preaching and teaching (see Matt. 5:1; Mark 4:1; Luke 5:3; John 8:2), a custom also followed, at least occasionally, by His disciples (see Acts 16:13). See p. 57.

Fastened. There was doubtless an atmosphere of suspense induced by the concentrated attention (see Acts 6:15; 10:4; etc.), and by an expression of seriousness on the face of Jesus. A similar effect was produced at each of the two cleansings of the Temple (see DA 157, 158, 591; see on Luke 2:48). The very atmosphere seemed vibrant with expectancy.

21. Began to say. Jesus was popularly considered a rabbi, or teacher (see John 1:38, 49; 3:2; 6:25). It was to be expected that as a visiting rabbi He would be asked to deliver the sermon, particularly in view of the fact that Nazareth was His home town and that in this very synagogue He had read from the Scriptures as a child (see on Luke 4:16). It is evident that Luke gives the barest outline of the remarks Christ made upon this occasion, probably selecting particularly those comments that produced the effect recorded in v. 22 and the violent reaction of vs. vs. 28, 29.

This day. This announcement no doubt made the people aware that Jesus considered *them* poor, brokenhearted, captives, blind, and bruised (DA 237). Again and again throughout His ministry Jesus quoted from the OT prophets and declared, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (DA 242).

This scripture. Critics who blithely assert that Jesus never thought of Himself as the Messiah of OT prophecy would do well to ponder this statement. In the days of Christ the Jews understood Isa. 61:1, 2 as a clear Messianic prophecy.

22. All bare him witness. The people of Nazareth had heard reports of the power that attended Jesus’ preaching during the time of His Judean ministry (see on Matt. 4:12). Now they themselves had come under the spell of that preaching. They now knew that the reports had not been exaggerated.

The gracious words. Much more must have been spoken than is here recorded. The flow of gracious, winning words charmed and fascinated the people.

Is not this? The form of the question in Greek implies that the questioners expected an affirmative answer. Their inquiry did not express uncertainty, but rather amazement. Their years of acquaintance with Jesus had led them to look upon Him as a common man like themselves, albeit, perhaps, not so faulty as they were. They refused to believe that He whom they knew so well could be the Promised One, and their lack of faith left them bewildered.

Joseph’s son. Jesus was commonly thought of as “Joseph’s son” (see on chs. 2:33, 41; 3:23). Jesus’ mother, brothers, and sisters were still living in Nazareth (see Matt. 13:54–56; DA 236), and were no doubt in the audience. Probably as the people thought to themselves, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” their glances turned naturally in the direction of

these members of the family of Jesus. One can but wonder what were the thoughts of Mary's heart upon an occasion such as this (see Luke 2:34, 35, 51).

23. Surely. Gr. *pantōs*, "altogether," "by all means," or "doubtless." *Pantōs* is used to emphasize affirmations or denials (see Acts 18:21; Rom. 3:9). As Jesus read the faces and hearts of the audience He knew well the thoughts that disturbed them. His endeavor to reveal to His hearers their true attitude and condition (see Luke 4:23–27) infuriated them still further and led to the attempt on His life. Jesus often made it evident that He read men's thoughts, and thereby gave evidence of His divinity (see on ch. 2:48).

Physician, heal thyself. This was apparently a popular proverb. The Hebrew version of the proverb reads, "Physician, heal your own lameness." In varying form the same thought was expressed by the Greeks and other peoples of ancient times, in sarcasm at unsuccessful treatment. It was this part of Jesus' discourse (vs. 23–27) which gave evidence that He read their secret thoughts (DA 238). Compare a similar taunt hurled at Him on the cross (see Matt. 27:42).

Commentators are not agreed as to the precise meaning Jesus intended the proverb to convey to His audience. Some have suggested that He was interpreting their thoughts as meaning, "You have shown many signs of healing and related miracles to others [meaning the people of Capernaum], now show a sign in behalf of yourself [that is, to the people of Nazareth]. You claim to be the Messiah of prophecy; let us see a few miracles." This demand for "signs" was often hurled at Jesus, yet He never complied with it (see Matt. 12:38, 39; Mark 8:11, 12; John 6:30–32).

This unspoken demand makes it clear that Jesus had performed no miracles during His childhood and youth, as the apocryphal gospels claim (see on Luke 2:52). The people of Nazareth were calling on Him to build up His reputation in Nazareth, saying, as it were, "Accredit yourself here."

Done in Capernaum. Many commentators have considered the reference to miracles at Capernaum as proof that this incident occurred later in the ministry of Christ in Galilee and that Luke's account of the visit to Nazareth in an account of the same incident recorded in Matt. 13:54–58 and Mark 6:1–6. However, this conclusion is unjustified in view of the fact that the nobleman's son had been healed in Capernaum (though Jesus was in Cana at the time), and the city was aroused by the incident (DA 200). The healing of the nobleman's son had occurred several months before this visit to Nazareth (see on John 4:53; see The Ministry of Our Lord). Also, the people of Galilee had undoubtedly heard reports of Jesus' miracles in Judea (see John 4:44, 45; DA 196). It is clear that the formal, sustained Capernaum ministry had not yet begun (see on Matt. 4:12, 13), although Jesus had already visited the city briefly (see Luke 4:14, 15; John 2:12). See additional Note on Luke 4.

24. Verily. Gr. *amēn*, "surely," or "truly" (see on Gen. 15:6; Deut. 7:9; Matt. 5:18).

No prophet. Jesus came to His own townsfolk and they received Him not (cf. John 1:11). Pride forbade their recognition of the presence of the Promised One in the carpenter whom they had known since early childhood (DA 237).

25. Elias. That is, Elijah.

Three years and six months. For the duration of the famine see on 1 Kings 18:1 (cf. James 5:17).

26. Unto none of them. God is unable to do anything for those who are hardhearted and unbelieving, who do not feel their need (see on Matt. 5:3). Our standing before God

is determined, not by the amount of light we have, but by the use we make of it (DA 239). It is of interest to note that Luke, who wrote primarily for Gentile readers, alone records these remarks of Jesus that were so complimentary to believing Gentiles and condemnatory of unbelieving Israelites.

Sarepta. That is, Zarephath, a city on the seacoast near modern *Şarafand*, about 15 mi. north of Tyre. Christ related the incident here mentioned as His first illustration of the truth He sought to convey in quoting the proverb of v. 23. It was lack of faith on the part of the townsfolk of Nazareth that prevented Him from performing miracles there (Mark 6:5, 6). It was not because He was unable to do so, but rather because they were unprepared to receive the blessings He wished to bestow upon them.

A widow. See 1 Kings 17:8–24.

27. Many lepers. Jesus provides a further illumination of the proverb quoted in v. 23. For the narrative of the healing of Naaman see 2 Kings 5:1–19. Some of the “many lepers ... in Israel” to whom Jesus referred are mentioned in 2 Kings 7:3.

Eliseus. That is, Elisha.

28. When they heard. The people of Nazareth were not slow to see the application of the words Jesus had spoken. They saw clearly the point He was making. Possibly there flashed before their memory some incidents from the Saviour’s childhood and youth when Jesus’ loyalty to right had silently condemned their own wrong course of action (DA 89); now the Lord’s implied rebuke fell heavily upon their reluctant hearts. Momentarily conscious of their own defective characters and of their need for true repentance and conversion, their evil hearts rose in revolt (see Rom. 8:7). Pride and prejudice darkened their unwilling minds to the light of truth that had momentarily penetrated their dim souls.

Filled with wrath. Aware that the words of Jesus described them perfectly, they were unwilling to hear more. To accept Him they must admit that they were no better than the heathen, whom they looked upon as dogs, and this they refused to do. They were unwilling to humble their hearts. How different the words of Jesus were from the “smooth things” they were accustomed to hearing (see on Isa. 30:10)! Apparently, the people of Nazareth would rather remain poor, blind, and in servitude (see Luke 4:18). Though they were wounded to the quick, their guilty consciences rose in haste to silence the piercing words of truth. Fierce national pride resented the thought that the blessings of the gospel should be made available to the heathen, and in their unreasoning bigotry they were ready to slay the Prince of life (see Acts 3:15).

29. Rose up. The people of Nazareth were through listening before Jesus was through speaking. They “received him not” (John 1:11). Murder was in their hearts, even on the Sabbath day, and they were ready to destroy Him.

Brow of the hill. Literally, the “eyebrow of the hill,” that is, a prominence or projection of the hill. The so-called Mount of the Precipitation, the traditional site of this event, is situated outside Nazareth, beyond the limits of a Sabbath day’s journey. More probably the people took Him to a limestone cliff about 30 or 40 ft. (9 or 12 m.) high at the southwestern corner of the town, overhanging the Maronite convent.

Whereon. On the hill, not on its brow.

30. Passing through. Angels shut Him in and conducted Him to a place of safety, as they did again on another occasion (cf. John 8:59), and as they have often protected Heaven’s witnesses in all ages (see DA 240). Thus it was with Lot (see Gen. 19:10, 11)

and with Elisha (see 2 Kings 6:17, 18), and thus it has been even in modern times. Jesus passed “through the midst” of the crowd under the protection of holy angels (see DA 240). At various times those bent on taking the life of Jesus were restrained from carrying out their evil intentions (see John 7:44–46; 10:31–39), for His work was not yet complete, His “hour was not yet come” (see John 7:30).

Went his way. As already noted, this visit to Nazareth, the first since Christ’s baptism, probably occurred in the late spring or early summer of A.D. 29 (see on v. 16). His next, and last, visit to the town came nearly a year later, in the early spring of A.D. 30, not long before the Passover (see on Mark 6:1–6).

31. Came down. [*Removal to Capernaum, Luke 4:31^a=Matt. 4:13–17=Mark 1:14, 15.* Major comment: Matthew.] From the village of Nazareth, high in the hills, to Capernaum, some 20 mi. (32 km.) away on the Lake of Galilee, it is literally “down”—from 1,144 ft. (349 m.) above sea level to 685 ft. (209 m.) below. It is possible that Mary and other members of the family may have accompanied Christ.

A city of Galilee. Probably an explanation added by Luke for the benefit of his readers, not all of whom were familiar with the geography of Palestine (see p. 664).

Taught them. [*The Demoniac in the Synagogue, Luke 4:31b–37=Mark 1:21–28.* Major comment: Mark.] According to the Greek, “continued to teach them.” A period of time was involved. The teaching began in the synagogue of Capernaum and probably centered there.

On the sabbath. As was the Lord’s habitual practice (see on v. 16).

32. Astonished. Astonishment was the usual reaction to Jesus’ teaching (see Matt. 7:28, 29; 13:54; Mark 6:2).

Power. Gr. *exousia*, “authority” (see on ch. 1:35). In regard to the impressive manner of Jesus’ speaking, see DA 237, 253–255.

33. In the synagogue. Perhaps this was the synagogue built by a Roman officer for the people of Capernaum (see ch. 7:5).

Devil. Literally, “demon” (see Additional Note on Mark 1).

34. Let us alone. Gr. *ea*, thought by some to be the imperative of *eaō*, “to let,” “to permit,” but more probably simply the interjection *ea*, “Ha!” or “Ah!” an exclamation of surprise or displeasure, anger or dismay.

35. Hurt him not. As he might have been expected to do (see on Mark 1:26). Only Luke the physician records this significant detail.

38. He arose. [*Peter’s Mother-in-law; The Sick Healed at Even, Luke 4:38–41=Matt. 8:14–17=Mark 1:29–34.* Major comment: Mark.] This likely refers to Jesus’ departure from the building.

Taken. Gr. *sunechō*, “to hold together,” or here, perhaps, “to hold fast.”

A great fever. That is, “a high fever.” This phrase may also have been a technical medical term. According to certain sources Greek medicine divided fevers into two classes—“great” and “small,” that is, “high” fevers and “slight” fevers.

39. He stood over her. As a physician might do.

41. Devils See Additional Note on Mark 1.

Thou art Christ. This is a more definite statement than that of the demoniac earlier in the day (see v. 34).

Suffered. Or, “allowed.” Jesus proceeded at once to silence them, perhaps because the testimony might be construed to mean that He was in league with them (see on Mark 3:11).

Christ. Literally, “the Christ,” that is, the Messiah. The definite article makes of the word a title rather than a personal name (see on Matt. 1:1).

42. When it was day. [*First Galilean Tour, Luke 4:42–44=Matt. 4:23–25=Mark 1:35–39. Major comment: Mark.*]

A desert. Gr. *erēmos* (see on ch. 1:80).

Stayed him. That is, they desired to prevent Christ from leaving them, apparently doing their best to hinder His departure.

44. Galilee. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading “Judea.” Luke seems to have used the term “Judea” as equivalent to “Palestine.” Since Luke wrote primarily for non-Palestinian Gentiles, he may have considered the term “Judea” more meaningful to them and sufficiently accurate for his purposes (see p. 664).

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 4

There is some difference of opinion as to whether the first rejection at Nazareth occurred before or after the Passover of A.D. 29. According to one view, this visit to Nazareth and other events down to and including the First Galilean Tour took place prior to the Passover. This conclusion is reached by equating Christ’s withdrawal from Judea to Galilee, mentioned in Matt. 4:12 and Mark 1:14 (because of John the Baptist’s imprisonment), with His withdrawal mentioned in John 4:1–3 (which resulted from contention between the disciples of Jesus and those of John).

In support of this view reference is made to: (1) A statement by A. T. Olmstead (*Jesus in the Light of History*, p. 281) assigning Christ’s reading of Isa. 61:1–3 upon this occasion to the 62d Seder of the Triennial Cycle of synagogue readings from the Law and the Prophets, which Seder, he assumes, “was read on December 18, 28 A.D.” (2) The fact that otherwise there would be a singular silence on the part of the synoptic writers concerning events between the Passovers of A.D. 28 and 29, as compared with a full account of events between the Passovers of A.D. 29 and 30. (3) The silence of Luke concerning the presence of the disciples with Jesus at the time of this visit to Nazareth. It is contended that following the interview with the nobleman at Cana, Jesus went alone to Nazareth, having sent His disciples on to Capernaum so that they would not witness the rejection at Nazareth. See *The Ministry of Our Lord*.

Difficulties with this view are as follows:

1. Olmstead’s claim that Jesus read from Isa. 61:1–3 because this was the regular Triennial Cycle reading for that particular Sabbath is based on a list of Triennial Cycle readings dating from about A.D. 600 and found in the *genizah* (a storeroom for worn-out scrolls) of the Fustat synagogue in Cairo. It is known that a Triennial Cycle was at one time in use in Palestine, but there is no evidence that particular readings from the Prophets were assigned for Sabbath reading in the synagogues prior to the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. Furthermore, Olmstead cites Jacob Mann (*The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue*, pp. 481, 569, 573) in support of the use of Isa. 61:1–3 as the reading from the Prophets for the 62d Seder when, in fact, Mann concludes that the reading from Isa. 61:1–3 was *not* the Triennial Cycle reading from the Prophets for the 62d Seder until long after NT times (pp. 481–487). The argument that the 62d Seder of

the Triennial Cycle provides a valid basis for dating the first rejection at Nazareth thus stands without confirmation. Furthermore, according to 2SP 110, “at the close of the service,” after the usual reading from the prophets (see p. 57) and exhortation by the elder, “Jesus rose with calm dignity, and requested them to bring him the book of the prophet Esaias.” Apparently, the selection was His own (see Vol. V, pp. 57, 58). See bibliographical entry for Olmstead, p. 265.

2. The argument that the silence of the synoptic writers requires the assignment of incidents in the Galilean ministry between the first rejection at Nazareth and the First Galilean Tour, inclusive, to the Passover year A.D. 28–29 is at best an argument from silence, and as such not convincing. John is as silent about the Galilean ministry as the synoptic writers are about the Judean ministry. So far as we know, none of the synoptic writers were eyewitnesses of the Judean ministry. Possibly the fact that the Judean ministry was unproductive in comparison with the Galilean ministry (see DA 194, 232), led the synoptic writers to see little point in giving an extended account of the former period. See on ch. 4:23.

3. The third contention is also based on an argument from silence, and therefore inconclusive. Thus the first view lacks positive evidence.

Reasons for assigning the first rejection at Nazareth to the spring of A.D. 29, after the Passover, are as follows:

1. John clearly states that the withdrawal from Judea to Galilee he records in ch. 4:1–3 came about as the result of contention between John’s disciples and those of Jesus (see chs. 3:25–36; 4:1, 2), and strongly implies that John was not in prison at the time this contention occurred (ch. 3:23–26). Had John been in prison, and his work thus halted, why would there have arisen any contention at all over the fact that “Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John” (John 4:1)? John would not have been baptizing if he had been in prison, and the disciples would hardly have entered into an argument about who was greater (John 3:23, 26, 30; cf. ch. 4:1). According to DA 179, when “the disciples of John came to him with their grievances,” his “mission seemed about to close,” yet “it was still possible for him to hinder the work of Christ” if he chose. He was still preaching and baptizing. In prison he could do little to “hinder the work of Christ.” For these reasons it seems difficult to equate the synoptic withdrawal of Matt. 4:12 and Mark 1:14 with that of John 4:1–3. Inspiration has tied the former exclusively to the imprisonment of John as it has the latter to contention between the two groups of disciples.

2. The synoptic withdrawal of Matt. 4:12 and Mark 1:14 and the commencement of the Galilean ministry are specifically located by DA 231, 232 and MB 2 *after* events of John 5, which took place at the Passover of A.D. 29. In the light of these references from the Spirit of prophecy the withdrawal mentioned by the synoptic writers can be equated with that of John 4:1–3 only if the first rejection at Nazareth, the early ministry at Capernaum, the call be the sea, and the First Galilean Tour are *not* considered as belonging to the Galilean ministry.

3. Jesus again referred to the message of Isa. 61:1–3 a few weeks later in the synagogue at Capernaum (DA 255), and seems to have employed words similar to those He spoke at Nazareth, upon numerous later occasions (see DA 237; cf. 242). Thus it seems that the reading of Isa. 61:1–3 at Nazareth and the sermon based on it were of

Jesus' own choosing (see p. 57; 2SP 110), and that He commonly preached from this text by way of setting forth the nature and objectives of His ministry.

It therefore seems preferable to assign the first rejection at Nazareth to the late spring of A.D. 29. See pp. 193, 247; *The Duration of Christ's Ministry, the Opening of the Galilean Ministry.*

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1, 2 DA 114
- 1-4Te 285
- 1-13DA 114-123
- 2 2T 202; 3T 486
- 3 EW 155; Te 275
- 4 EW 155; Te 276
- 5-8EW 157
- 5-13DA 124-131
- 6, 7 DA 129
- 7 5T 481
- 8 DA 130; GC 51
- 10-12EW 156
- 16, 17 DA 236
- 16-19WM 170
- 16-27AA 416
- 16-30DA 236-243
- 18 COL 158; CS 162; DA 428, 500, 823; Ed 113; Ev 581; GC 20, 327; MH 423, 443; SC 11; 6T 225; 8T 308; WM 78
- 18, 19 COL 417; DA 358; PK 718; 3T 388; 8T 134
- 18-22DA 237
- 21DA 242
- 22 FE 472
- 23-27DA 238
- 25 GC 323
- 27 PK 253
- 28-30DA 240
- 29, 30 EW 159
- 32 DA 253, 355, 453; Ed 81; GC 346
- 33-36GC 515
- 35 MH 91
- 36 GC 516
- 38 DA 259; MH 29
- 43 MH 31

CHAPTER 5

1 Christ teacheth the people out of Peter's ship: 4 in a miraculous taking of fishes, sheweth how he will make him and his partners fishers of men: 12 cleanseth the leper: 16 prayeth in the wilderness: 18 healeth one sick of the palsy: 27 calleth Matthew the publican: 29 eateth with sinners, as being the physician of souls: 34 foretelleth the fastings and afflictions of the apostles after his ascension: 36 and likeneth fainthearted and weak disciples to old bottles and worn garments.

1. It came to pass. [*The Call by the Sea*, Luke 5:1–11=Matt. 4:18–22=Mark 1:16–20. Major comment: Luke. See Early Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Luke records, out of its natural order, the call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John by the Lake of Galilee. Chronologically, this account (vs. 1–11) belongs between vs. 32 and 33 of ch. 4 (see on Matt. 4:23). Luke’s reason for so placing it, apparently, is his desire to group the two instances of synagogue preaching together, the one in Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30) and the other in Capernaum (vs. 31–37), and to link the call of the disciples (ch. 5:1–11) with his account of the first preaching tour through Galilee (vs. 12–15).

Pressed. In view of the apparent similarities between the incident here related and that of John 21:1–17, some commentators have concluded that the two accounts are different versions of the same event. However, a careful study of the context precludes such a possibility (see also DA 809–817).

It was early morning when Jesus walked by the sea, yet already people were thronging about Him. This fact testifies to His “fame,” or popularity, even before the miraculous events of a yet future Sabbath day (ch. 4:31–41).

Word of God. That is, as set forth in the preaching and teaching of Jesus. His words were gracious (see ch. 4:22), fraught with life-giving power (see John 6:63, 68), and the people hungered for them. How their hearts must have thrilled as they listened to Him who was the Word of God incarnate (see on John 1:1–3).

Lake. Gr. *limnē*, “a pool of water.” Luke, whose travels had acquainted him more intimately with the Mediterranean Sea, never speaks of Galilee as a “sea,” (Gr. *thalassa*), but consistently uses the term *limnē*, “lake.” The other gospel writers, however, always call it *thalassa*, “sea.”

Gennesaret. Nearby was the fertile Plain of Gennesaret, which probably gave to the lake its name (see Matt. 14:34; Mark 6:53). The plain, situated between the hills and the lake, with Capernaum on the north and Magdala on the south, is now called *el-Ghuweir*. The plain covers an area about 3 mi. (c. 5 km.) long and 1.5 mi. (c. 2.4 km.) wide. Because of its semitropical climate it was able to produce walnuts, figs, olives, and grapes. The Lake of Gennesaret was commonly called the Sea of Chinnereth in OT times (Num. 34:11; Joshua 12:3; etc.). In the time of Christ the Sea of Galilee (or Lake of Gennesaret) bordered on the richest and most populous district of all Palestine. Galilee was populated chiefly with Jews, yet was quite some distance from Jerusalem, the focal center of Judaism (see on Luke 2:42, 44). Galilee was somewhat removed from the prejudice and animosity of Judaism, and in many respects was an ideal place for Christ to carry on His work.

2. Ships. Or, “boats.” One of the boats here mentioned belonged to Peter and Andrew; the other, to James and John.

The fishermen. Literally, “the sea folk.” The four fishermen soon to become fishers of men, together with Zebedee and two or more “hired servants” (see Mark 1:20), had just returned from their night’s fishing expedition (see Luke 5:5).

Washing their nets. That is, before hanging them up to dry. The expression “casting a net” (see Matt. 4:18; Mark 1:16) means simply that the men were fishing, and might be considered as describing any phase of their occupation. Caring for the nets was as

important as actually using them to catch fish. Others of the group were “mending” their nets (see Matt. 4:21; Mark 1:19), that is, getting them in shape for the next fishing expedition. If the terms “casting” and “mending” are considered in their general aspects there is no discrepancy in the various narratives (see Additional Notes on Matt 3, Note 2; cf. on Mark 5:2; 10:46; Luke 7:3; Additional Note on Luke 7).

3. *Simon’s*. That is, Simon Peter’s (see v. 8). For further information on Peter and his relation to the other members of the group here busy caring for their nets see on Mark 3:16.

He sat down. Teachers customarily sat as they addressed their classes. This was true both of the rabbinical schools and of public instruction given by the rabbis in the Temple courts in Jerusalem. Those teaching in the synagogues also customarily sat as they taught (see on ch. 4:20).

4. *Let down.* Gr. *chalaō*, a term used to describe the lowering of cargo or boats. In Acts 27:17 it is used of striking the sails, and in v. 30 of lowering the lifeboats. It is also used of Paul when he was “let down” from the wall of Damascus in a basket (Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:33).

A draught. That is, “a catch.”

5. *Master.* Gr. *epistatēs*, literally, “one who stands over [another]”; hence “an overseer,” or “a superintendent.” Luke is the only synoptic writer who uses this word of Jesus. The more common word, used frequently by Luke and the other gospel writers, is *didaskalos*, literally, “teacher” (see on John 1:32). Peter was, in fact, the *epistatēs*, or “superintendent,” of the fishing enterprise conducted by the two sets of brothers and their hired helpers (see on Mark 3:16).

Toiled all the night. In the daytime fish could see the nets spread in the clear waters of the Lake of Galilee. The only favorable time for fishing was at night.

Taken nothing. The waters of the Lake of Galilee abounded with fish, and fishing was a common occupation in that region. It may have been a rather unusual experience to come back without anything at all. May we not suppose it possible that the same power that a few minutes later provided an abundance of fish, had rendered fruitless the laborious efforts of the night? Efforts put forth in our own strength sometimes prove completely fruitless, because the results desired can be secured only through cooperation with a higher power. But at times, as would seem to have been the case here, God may interfere with our plans and efforts in order to make more apparent and meaningful the need of cooperating with Him.

Nevertheless. Fishing had been Peter’s business, perhaps from childhood. He had apparently been reasonably successful at it, for a group of men had associated themselves with him in the business. As an experienced fisherman Peter probably thought his own knowledge of fishing superior to that of Christ, who had been a carpenter and cabinetmaker. However, in love for his Master, and in confidence based on what he had seen Jesus do in the past, Peter, with his companions, complied with Jesus’ request. Under any circumstances they could do no worse than they had done all night.

Remembering their fruitless efforts of the night before, Peter and his fellow fishermen were without doubt discouraged. During the long watches of the night Peter, and probably his companions as well, reflected on the fate of John the Baptist, who had now languished in prison for six weary months (see on ch. 3:20). Possibly they also gave

thought to the failure of Christ to win the confidence and support of the Jewish leaders during the year that had passed, when most of His efforts had been devoted to Judea. Perhaps they also called to mind the recent experience at Nazareth, where Christ's own townsmen tried to slay Him. Weary from fruitless toil, their hearts tortured and tempted by the demon of unbelief, Peter and his fellows, like Jacob long before, were no doubt ready to exclaim, "All these things are against me!" (see Gen. 42:36). Nevertheless, the discouraging experience of the night was about to be followed by an experience that would prove to Peter, the fisherman, to be conclusive evidence of the divinity of Christ. Similarly, in the ministry of Jesus, the discouraging experiences of Judea and Nazareth were about to give way to the glorious successes of Galilee. Soon the throngs would press upon Jesus so that He would need, at times, to hide from them in order so much as to eat and sleep.

Net. Better, "nets."

6. They. That is, Peter and Andrew. James and John apparently continued to set their nets in order on the shore of the lake (see v. 7).

A great multitude. Earlier they had been able to catch nothing; now they were cooperating with Jesus, and their success exceeded their fondest expectations. Even as Christ, when living as a man among men, did nothing of Himself (see John 5:19, 30; 8:28), so those who would follow Him to become fishers of men must learn that without Him they can do nothing (John 15:5). It is only when divine power is combined with human effort, particularly in the work of fishing for men, that results can be effective and permanent. Compare the multitude of fish caught under similar circumstances about a year and a half later (see John 21:11).

Brake. Peter and Andrew were in danger of losing their great catch of fish. The fact that the net began to break implies that this catch of fish was unusual at any time, particularly by day. Here was evidence of divine power that could not be questioned, evidence that would impress other fishermen along the shore.

7. Beckoned. Probably Peter and Andrew were too far out to be heard distinctly, and yet were not out of sight.

Partners. Gr. *metochoi*, literally, "[ones] sharing in." The reference here is probably to James and John (see v. 10). *Metochoi* is translated "partakers" in Heb. 3:1, 14; 12:8, in reference to our partnership with Christ.

8. Peter saw it. Being a master fisherman and probably having spent most of his life at this occupation in these very waters, Peter quickly concluded that a miracle had occurred. Peter thought he knew the habits of the fish of Galilee, but even the fish of his own lake were apparently subject to Jesus. Now, he too was ready to obey the summons of the Master Fisher of men. See on vs. 6, 9.

Fell down. That is, while the boats were still out in the lake and while the others were securing the contents of the nets. Apparently, Christ was still in Simon's boat (see vs. 3).

Depart from me. With telling force the sense of his own unworthiness to be associated with Jesus bore down upon the conscience of Peter. Yet he clung to Christ, silently testifying that his words reflected a sense of utter unworthiness rather than the desire to be separated from Jesus (see DA 246).

A sinful man. In the presence of a policeman a thief naturally feels uncomfortable, even though the policeman may not be aware of his criminal acts. How much more, then, should a sinner feel shame and unworthiness in the presence of a perfect Saviour. This

sense of unworthiness is the first reaction in the human heart when God, through His Spirit, begins His work of transforming the life and character. Thus it was with Isaiah when, in vision, he was ushered into the divine presence (Isa. 6:5). God can do nothing for the man who does not first feel his need of salvation. Only those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled (see on Matt 5:3, 6). Upon Peter there now dawned, perhaps for the first time, a profound sense of his own spiritual need.

Lord. Gr. *Kurios*, a title that Luke applies to Jesus frequently in his Gospel (see on ch. 2:29).

9. He was astonished. Literally, “astonishment enveloped him,” or “amazement encompassed him.” Joy over the greatness of the catch faded, as with clearer vision Peter and his partners looked beyond the material evidence of divine power to the invisible truth to which the miracle bore mute witness.

10. So was also James. Peter’s three partners are mentioned by name. They have already been referred to in v. 9 as “all that were with him.” Luke thus emphasizes the fact that all four of the men responded similarly to the miracle and appreciated its significance. The fact that here, as elsewhere, James is commonly named before his brother John suggests that he was the older of the two (see DA 292).

Zebedee. See on Matt. 4:21.

Partners. Gr. *koinōnoi*, “associates,” or “partners.” *Koinōnoi* denotes a slightly closer association than does *metochoi* (see on v. 7).

Unto Simon. Compare Matt. 4:18–22; see on Mark 1:16. Although Jesus addressed Himself primarily to Simon, who had been first to grasp the significance of the miracle and to respond accordingly, the others knew that they too were included (see Luke 5:11).

Catch. Gr. *zōgreō*, from *zōos*, “alive,” or “living,” and *agreuō*, “to catch”; hence, “to take alive,” or “to capture.” The Master Fisherman, this very moment, was “catching” Peter, Andrew, James, and John. The miracle was His “net.” His purpose in “catching” these four men “alive” was that they, in turn, should “catch” others “alive.” The figure was not entirely new, for long before this the prophet Jeremiah had spoken in similar language (see Jer. 16:16). Peter, Andrew, James, and John were now caught in the gospel net; there was no escape; in fact, there was no desire to escape (see on Luke 5:8, 9).

What a contrast! All their lives they had caught fish, which died as a result of capture; henceforth they were to catch men, “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10; cf. Luke 19:10).

11. They forsook all. Here were the four partners, in possession of the largest catch of fish they had ever brought to shore. At the moment of their greatest material success they abandoned their business (see DA 273). Even in view of the higher significance of the miracle it must have taken a real measure of faith to leave their chosen occupation for an uncertain livelihood as followers of an itinerant teacher who, up to this time, had apparently had small success (DA 245). But in the provision of the abundance of fish, Jesus gave evidence of His power to provide for the needs of His followers, and in humble faith they believed.

On the part of the disciples there was not the least hesitancy. The decision to dissolve their successful partnership as fishermen for a higher partnership with Jesus as fishers of men was made instantly and intelligently. They needed no time to think things over, no time to provide for the needs of their families (cf. Matt. 8:19–22). They had launched out

into the deep as ordinary fishermen; when they returned to shore they launched out by faith into the “deep” to which Christ now called them, to fish for men. All night long they had sought in vain to find that with which they proposed to sustain their lives; now, for Christ’s sake, they were willing to lose all that life had to offer, and in so doing entered upon a richer, more abundant life (see Matt. 10:39). They took up the cross of service and followed in the footsteps of Jesus (see on Mark 3:14).

Like Paul a few years later, they were ready to write off as loss all their earthly possessions, for they considered “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus” of infinitely greater value. Those things that had formerly seemed of value now appeared worthless. Henceforth their lot was to learn of Jesus, to fellowship with Him in His sufferings, and to share with all men a knowledge of the power of His resurrection (see Phil. 3:8–10). Having found the Pearl of great price, they disposed of all their earthly possessions and interests and invested all their physical and intellectual capital in the cause of the kingdom of heaven (see Matt. 13:45, 46).

Followed him. Heretofore at least three of the four—Peter, Andrew, and John—had intermittently accompanied Jesus. The call they had received at the Jordan two autumns before was a call to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Lamb of God, who had come to take away the sin of the world (see on John 1:35–50). Now they were called to unite their life and fortune with His, not only as believers but as learners and workers. Prior to this none of the group had fully and permanently united with Jesus (DA 246). They had been part-time disciples, their interests divided between this life and the higher life. Henceforth their time and talents were to be devoted to full-time service. The four followed Jesus, not because they were too lazy to work with their hands for a living, or because their physical labors had not been successful, but because of their profound convictions. Like the others whom Christ called, they were active in their chosen occupation until summoned to forsake all and follow Him.

None of the four would have been considered by the learned men of the nation as having sufficient qualifications to become a teacher. They were humble and unlearned, but these very traits were pre-requisite to discipleship. The fact that they were not educated in the false views of the rabbis made it easier for them to learn the lessons necessary to make them skilled workmen in building the kingdom of heaven (see on Mark 3:15). Though at times they were slow to learn the lessons Jesus sought to teach them, they were sincerely devoted to Him. His love gradually transformed their hearts and minds, in proportion to the extent they individually yielded to Him. When they came forth from the period of training they were no longer uncultured and unlearned, but men of penetrating discernment and sound judgment. They were so much like Jesus, in fact, that others realized they had been with Him (see Acts 4:13).

Usefulness in the cause of God does not depend so much upon brilliant intellect as upon devotion to Christ and to the task at hand. To be sure, the influence of a person with great talents and superior intelligence will usually be felt in a wider circle, if these talents are consecrated to God (see COL 333). Yet God can dispense with these more easily than He can with a loving heart, a teachable mind, and willing hands. The all-important thing in service for God is that self be put aside and room be made for the working of the Holy Spirit upon the heart (see DA 250).

12. In a certain city. [*The First Leper*, Luke 5:12–16=Matt. 8:2–4=Mark 1:40–45. Major comment: Mark.] Literally, “in one of the cities.”

Full of leprosy. Luke, a physician, is the only gospel writer to note the advanced stage of the disease. This condition made the cure even more remarkable.

17. On a certain day. [*The Paralytic Lowered Through the Roof*, Luke 5:17–26=Matt. 9:2–8=Mark 2:1–12. Major comment: Mark.] Literally, “in one of the days.”

Pharisees. The first mention of this religious sect in the Gospel of Luke. Concerning the Pharisees, see pp. 51, 52.

Doctors. Literally, “teachers” (see pp. 51, 52; see on Mark 1:22). The English word “doctor” originally meant “teacher”; in fact, like our word “doctrine,” or “teaching,” it is from the Latin *doctor*, “teacher.” Application of the term “doctor” to a physician is a modern use of the word. In the Gospels, “doctors of the law” are generally called “scribes” (see pp. 51, 52). These men concerned themselves primarily with the exposition of the written and oral laws of the nation, and with the application of these laws to life. Most of them were Pharisees, for it was the Pharisees who took particular interest in the details of the law.

Every town. According to Josephus there were about 200 cities and towns in Galilee. Luke is therefore probably using hyperbole, and may be referring particularly to the towns visited by Christ on His recent tour through Galilee. Undoubtedly, wherever Jesus went the professed teachers of the law sought to oppose and hinder His exposition of the law, and seem to have gathered at Capernaum to counsel with the leaders from Judea and Jerusalem as to the course of action they should pursue with respect to the popular sentiment in Christ’s favor. They were here on purpose to find fault with Him and to make charges against Him (see on Mark 2:6).

Jerusalem. That Luke specifically mentions Jerusalem in addition to Judea is evidence that he was acquainted with the Jewish practice of considering Jerusalem a separate district from Judea (see also Acts 1:8; 10:39). The city was a metropolitan area, not under the political jurisdiction of Judea. However, see on Luke 4:44.

Power of the Lord. That is, of the Holy Spirit (see DA 143, 268).

Present to heal. Particular mention of the presence of the Holy Spirit upon this occasion does not imply that Christ had only intermittent power to heal. Luke simply calls attention to the fact in anticipation of the miracle he is about to relate.

24. Power. Literally, “authority.”

26. Strange things. Gr. *paradoxa*, from *para*, here meaning, “contrary to,” and *doxa*, “[popular] opinion,” hence meaning, “unexpected,” or “incredible.” Our word “paradox” is from this Greek word, and has a somewhat similar meaning. Of the three synoptic writers, Luke alone mentions all three aspects of the reaction of the people to this miracle—amazement, fear, and gratitude to God. See p. 208.

27. After these things. [*Call of Levi* Matthew, Luke 5:27, 28=Matt. 9:9=Mark 2:13, 14. Major comment: Mark.]

Saw. Gr. *theaomai*, “to behold,” or “to view attentively.” Christ had been intently observing Matthew, as if reading his character.

28. He left all. Only Luke records this detail of the narrative. Matthew did not, in fact could not, return to his business on a part-time basis, as Peter, Andrew, and John had done for the first year and a half after meeting Christ at the Jordan (see on John 1:35–45).

29. A great feast. [*Mathew’s feast*, Luke 5:29–32=Matt. 9:10–13=Mark 2:15–17. Major comment: Mark.] Literally, “a great reception.” Luke uses the same Greek word again in ch. 14:13, its only other use in the NT.

30. Murmured. Gr. *gogguzō*, a word imitating the sound of the cooing of doves or pigeons, which seem to be incessantly arguing about something.

Publicans and sinners. In Greek, a single definite article defines both words, so putting the two groups into one category. From the viewpoint of the Pharisees there was no difference between them. A “publican” was automatically a “sinner” simply by virtue of the fact that he was a tax collector (see on ch. 3:12).

33. Fast often. [*The Question About Fasting, Luke 5:33–39=Matt. 9:14–17=Mark 2:18–22. Major comment: Mark.*]

36. No man putteth. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for adding the word “teareth,” to make the statement read: “No man teareth a piece from a new garment and putteth [it] upon an old.”

The new maketh a rent. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 46) the reading “he will make a rent.” The new garment is torn (by having the patch material taken out of it), and the old is not bettered materially (by having a patch of such diverse material placed upon it).

Agreeth not. Or, “will not match.” Only Luke notes this further fact, namely, that the patch is of different material from the old garment, and that thus the appearance is marred.

39. No man. Only Luke records this added comment of Christ.

The old is better. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading “The old is good,” that is, the old is mild or pleasant. One who is accustomed to the old wine considers it more mellow, in comparison with the new, and therefore more pleasing. Christ says that a person used to old wine finds that it is pleasant to his taste; it suits him well, and that is enough. He will not change his old habits. This parable illustrates the deep-grained prejudice of the Pharisees.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–3DA 244

1–11DA 244–251

4 Ev 60, 371; FE 121; MH 200; 7T 61

4, 5 DA 245

6–11DA 246

8 MB 7

12 DA 266

12–28DA 262–271

15 CH 527

15, 16 DA 362

17 DA 267; MH 75

17–20DA 268

18–20MH 73–75

20 DA 270; 7T 96

21 TM 71; 8T 202

26 DA 270; MH 79; 6T 437

27, 28 COL 393; MH 479

27–39DA 272–280

28 DA 273

29 DA 274

31 COL 158; FE 275

34 DA 277
36, 37 DA 278
39 DA 279

CHAPTER 6

1 *Christ reproveth the Pharisees' blindness about the observation of the sabbath, by scripture, reason, and miracle: 13 chooseth twelve apostles: 17 healeth the diseased: 20 preacheth to his disciples before the people of blessings and curses; 27 how we must love our enemies: 46 and join the obedience of good works to the hearing of the word: lest in the evil day of temptation we fall like an house built upon the face of the earth, without any foundation.*

1. Second sabbath after the first. [*Plucking Grain on the Sabbath, Luke 6:1–5=Matt. 12:1–8=Mark 2:23–28.* Major comment: Mark.] Gr. *sabbaton deuteroprōton*, literally, “second-first Sabbath.” The precise meaning of the expression thus translated is uncertain. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) reading simply “a Sabbath.” Some translators feel that the weight of evidence favors the shorter reading, while others hold to the longer reading. *Deuteroprōtos* occurs nowhere else, either in the Bible or in ancient Greek literature. Some have conjectured that it may have meant the second Sabbath after the Passover; others, that it was the first Sabbath of a second year in a sabbatical year series; others, that it was the second Sabbath in a series of Sabbaths in the ritual calendar; still others, that it simply distinguishes the Sabbath here mentioned from the former Sabbaths of ch. 4:16, 31. None of these suggestions seem to have much evidence in their favor. Perhaps it is best simply to admit that we do not know what idea this word conveys.

5. And he said. The Codex Bezae places v. 5 immediately after v. 10, and substitutes a curious, but otherwise unsupported, insertion here: “On the same day, beholding one working on the sabbath, he said to him, ‘Man, if you know what you are doing, happy are you; but if you do not know, cursed are you and a transgressor of the law!’” Such an obvious interpolation, though interesting, is of no value in Biblical exegesis. It was apparently made in the endeavor to provide scriptural support for Sundaykeeping.

6. On another sabbath. [*The Man With a Withered Hand, Luke 6:6–11=Matt. 12:9–14=Mark 3:1–6.* Major comment: Mark and Luke. See *Early Galilean Ministry*; on miracles pp. 208–213.] The Scriptures give no clue as to the chronological setting of the incident of vs. 6–11. It might be concluded from Matt. 12:9, taken alone, that the healing of the withered hand took place on the same Sabbath as the incident in the grain field, but Luke makes clear that it was “on another sabbath.” Furthermore, Jesus and His disciples were on their way home from the synagogue as they passed through the grain field (DA 284), whereas they are in the synagogue on this occasion (see Matt. 12:9). It seems that all three synoptic writers have grouped together certain incidents of conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in topical rather than chronological order, the better to emphasize the growing opposition of the scribes and Pharisees toward Jesus and His work. See pp. 191, 192, 274.

Taught. Only Luke records the fact that Christ gave what we would call the sermon (see on v. 4:16, 17, 20, 21).

Right hand. Only Luke, with the professional eye of the physician, notes this particular. Whether it was the hand only, or the hand and the arm, that was atrophied, or

paralyzed, is not certain. The Greek word here translated “hand” may also include the arm, and is so used by Greek writers. This was Christ’s fifth recorded encounter with the scribes and Pharisees since the opening of His Galilean ministry (see on Mark 2:24).

7. Scribes and Pharisees. For a discussion of these groups see pp. 51, 52, 55. It is likely that there would be scribes and Pharisees in any large synagogue on any particular Sabbath; however, it is probable that some, at least, of those present were in attendance as spies for the specific purpose of observing Jesus and reporting on what He might do and say (see on Mark 2:6).

Watched. According to the Greek, “kept watching.” The men who so intently watched Jesus were probably present for that specific purpose. In fact, spies continued to dog the footsteps of Christ throughout the remainder of His Galilean ministry.

Heal on the sabbath day. Compare the healing of the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum (see Mark 1:21–28), the healing of the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda (see John 5:1–16), the blind man at the Pool of Siloam (see John 9:1–7), the woman infirm for 18 years (see Luke 13:10–17), the man with the dropsy (see ch. 14:1–6). In addition to these more public Sabbath miracles, Christ also healed Peter’s mother-in-law at home (see Mark 1:29–31). Together with the healing of the man with a withered hand, these make seven recorded miracles of healing performed on the Sabbath day. Thus, of about 20 specific cases of healing mentioned in the Gospels, a third occurred on the Sabbath. See pp. 210–212; see on John 5:16.

Find. The scribes and Pharisees were bent on finding out how to bring the ministry of Christ to a halt; they were determined to make a case against Him.

8. He knew their thoughts. See on Mark 2:8. With the spies now in pursuit of Him, Jesus would have no difficulty in being able to determine the trend of their thinking with respect to anything He might do. Their very presence gave them away; and as if that were not enough, their facial expressions told the same story. This is not, however, to say, as do some critics, that Jesus did not have supernatural power to read men’s thoughts. There were several instances in which He most certainly displayed supernatural understanding of the thought processes of various persons (see John 8:6–9; 13:21–30; DA 461, 655).

Stand forth in the midst. The man was not only to rise to his feet but to change his position, so that all in the synagogue could easily see him. Quite likely he was sitting in the rear, or in a corner, or perhaps behind a pillar. On the other hand, Jesus was probably at the front of the synagogue at the time and doubtless invited the man to come near to where He Himself was standing or sitting at the moment. In striking contrast with the candor, frankness and openness of Jesus were the devious and clumsily hidden attempts of the scribes and Pharisees to spy on Him and to lay traps for Him.

9. I will ask. According to Matthew’s account of the incident, it seems that the Pharisees had already raised the question of the propriety of healing on the Sabbath (see Matt. 12:10).

Is it lawful? See on Mark 2:24. Rabbinical laws were again shown to be in conflict with the needs of humanity. Those who today claim that Jesus paid no regard to the law of God, in other words, that by precept and example He departed from the claims of the fourth commandment, join forces with the scribes and the Pharisees and partake of their spirit. At the close of His earthly life Jesus affirmed that He had kept His Father’s every command (see John 15:10).

Good, or to do evil. Here in the sense of bringing benefit or harm. According to Matthew's account, the scribes and Pharisees had previously addressed the question to Jesus, as to whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:10). Rabbinical regulations made a careful distinction between cases of chronic sicknesses and cases involving immediate danger of death. Specifically, certain diseases were named as being more grave than others, and those suffering from these diseases might be given help according to their need. On the Sabbath little provision was made for relieving pain that did not involve acute illnesses, or for helping those who had suffered long, such as the one Jesus was about to heal. It is probable that the law was more or less liberally interpreted, and that persons suffering from many other diseases were actually cared for on the Sabbath. For further information on the rabbinical principles for Sabbath care of the sick, see Mishnah *Shabbath* 14. 4; 22. 6, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 539, 540, 747.

To save life. According to another Jewish maxim, to refuse to do good would be to inflict injury, to neglect to care for life would be to take life. But this man's life was not in danger, and the act of healing could therefore be postponed until after the Sabbath. But Jesus affirmed that it could not be wrong to do good on the Sabbath. From Jesus' point of view, to pass by the opportunity of bringing relief to the sufferer would be to do wrong. The scribes and Pharisees were thinking of their petty rule that would be violated; Jesus was directing their attention to the fundamental principle involved. Not to save a life would be to take it; not to do that which would enhance life would be to diminish it (see James 4:17). This was an extension of the principle of the sixth commandment, as illuminated by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (see on Matt. 5:21–24), and the sixth commandment was in no way in conflict with the fourth. The Sabbath, Jesus said, was "made for man" (Mark 2:27), and acts of mercy and necessity were entirely in keeping with its objectives.

The scribes and Pharisees had murder in their hearts. Their accusation was part of the plot to take Jesus' life (see on Luke 6:11; cf. Acts 3:15), and Jesus, knowing "their thoughts," knew that they were plotting to destroy Him (see Luke 6:8). Probably Jesus had this in mind when He spoke about destroying life, and sought to direct their attention to the fact that their malice made them the real Sabbathbreakers.

Matthew adds the significant illustration by which Christ called attention to the fact that they would do for a dumb animal that which they would be unwilling to do for a human being (see Matt. 12:11, 12). Some of them would let a man suffer, but would save an animal from suffering—lest, of course, financial loss result to the owner. Only a false concept of God could lead to any Sabbath regulation that places a lower value on human life than on the life of dumb brutes.

10. Looking round about. Having stated clearly the fundamental principle involved, Jesus paused to give time for His words to take effect. His piercing glance swept slowly over the expectant audience, probably to reinforce the lesson and drive it home to the hearts of friend and foe. As when He cleansed the Temple, His glance overpowered the assembly with a sense of awe, arraigning those present before the bar of divine justice—before Him who had made the Sabbath and who was to judge them at the last day (see DA 158; cf. 590). Every eye was riveted upon Jesus and the man standing near Him. The principle involved had been clearly stated; now Jesus was about to break the impressive silence by acting in harmony with the principle.

Stretch forth thy hand. Jesus called upon the man to do that which, up to that moment, he had been altogether unable to do, and he did it. The man thus gave evidence of his faith in the power of Jesus; he obeyed the command of Him who had also commanded the observance of the Sabbath, and he was made physically whole. The cooperation of human effort with divine power is ever essential to mankind—whether it be in the realm of physical or spiritual things. Without such cooperation there can be neither physical nor spiritual healing.

11. Madness. Gr. *anoia*, literally, “a lack of sense,” from *a*, a negative prefix, and *nous*, “mind”; hence, “senseless rage.” These men were “out of their heads.” From the point of view of the Pharisees this was at least the fifth offense of Jesus against rabbinical law since the beginning of His Galilean ministry (see on Mark 2:24). His enemies were filled with fury; their rage was akin to insanity. The same spirit that possessed the demoniac (see Additional Note on Mark 1) was hardening their hearts.

Communed. They were no longer able to contain themselves, and their anger boiled over as they began discussing what to do about the situation. Their dilemma lay in the fact that Jesus had clearly enunciated a principle they could not deny, and that the people sided with Jesus. According to the account in Mark, it appears that they could not even wait for the close of the service, but stepped outside before the assembly disbanded, to discuss the matter (see on ch. 3:6).

What they might do. Earlier, in the spring of the same year, A.D. 29, the Sanhedrin had determined to take Jesus’ life and had set spies to follow Him and to report all that He said and did (see DA 213; John 5:18; see on Mark 2:6). The decision had already been made, and it remained only a question as to how they might accomplish the deed with a semblance of legality. The reactions of the people and of their leaders were strikingly opposite. The envy, malice, and hatred of the scribes and Pharisees rose in direct proportion to the swelling tide of popularity that met Christ’s labors in Galilee. Sensing imminent danger, His mother and brethren, a little later, urged Him to discontinue His ministry because of the opposition it aroused (see on Matt. 12:46).

12. In those days. [*Appointment of the Twelve, Luke 6:12–16=Mark 3:13–19.* Major comment: Mark.] That is, not long after the experience recorded in vs. 6–11.

To pray. Luke seems to have been particularly impressed with the prayer life of Jesus, and makes reference to it more often than do the other gospel writers. For a discussion of the prayer life of Jesus see on Mark 3:13.

14. Simon. Up to this point in the narrative Luke usually refers to Peter as Simon (chs. 4:38; 5:3–5, 10), except for once as Simon Peter (ch. 5:8). Henceforth, he is usually referred to as Peter (chs. 8:45, 51; 9:20, 28, 32, 33; 12:41; etc.).

16. Was the traitor. Literally, “became a traitor.” At this time Judas was not a traitor, except potentially. At the time he was chosen he manifested no tendency toward treachery. Doubtless he himself did not realize that certain latent, wrong traits of character, if cherished, would lead to so inglorious a climax to his life (see on Mark 3:19).

17. Came down. [*Sermon on the Mount, Luke 6:17–49=Matt. 5:1 to 8:1.* Major comment: Matthew.] That is, from the mountain where He had spent the night in prayer prior to the appointment and ordination of the Twelve (see on Mark 3:13).

The plain. Literally, “a level place,” perhaps the level place in the hills where Jesus led the throng (see DA 298; see on Matt. 5:1).

19. Sought to touch him. See on Mark 3:10.

Virtue. Gr. *dunamis*, “power” (see on ch. 1:35). The accompanying verb translated “went out,” is more correctly rendered, “was coming out.” Emphasis is on the fact that divine power *kept* coming from Him. Power radiated from Him whenever there was need of it. “The very air was electric with spiritual power” (Robertson). So it should be with Christ’s representatives today.

20. Lifted up. See on Matt. 5:2.

Blessed. Luke records four of the eight beatitudes given by Matthew. For a comparison of the two series of beatitudes, see on Matt. 5:3. In addition to four blessings, Luke gives four comparable woes (see Luke 6:24–26).

Ye poor. Luke seems to apply the beatitudes more literally, or materially, than does Matthew (see on Matt. 5:3). This literalness becomes even more apparent in connection with the accompanying woes (see on Luke 6:24). Nevertheless, Luke’s brief and literal record of the beatitudes should be read in the light of the more complete and specific record of the sermon as reported by Matthew. The strong contrast between poverty, hunger, and persecution “now,” and the future state of blessing (see v. 21, etc.), may at first seem to lend a materialistic slant to Christ’s words. But in the setting of the sermon as a whole (see on Matt. 5:2), it becomes clear that this is not the case. Christ is simply contrasting the present state of those seeking the kingdom, with their condition after entering the kingdom.

22. Separate you. Thought by some to be a reference to excommunication from the synagogue (see John 9:22, 34; 12:42; 16:2). Excommunication might be either permanent, involving complete exclusion from Judaism for all time, or merely temporary. In the time of Christ temporary excommunication lasted for a period of thirty days, during which the person thus “separated” was not only deprived of participation in religious ritual, but was not supposed to come within 4 cu. (about 7 ft.) of another person. Excommunication thus implied both religious and social contamination, or uncleanness. See Jerusalem Talmud *Mo’ed Katan* 3. 81c. 50, cited in Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 4, p. 299.

Cast out your name. That is, throw it away contemptuously. This refers to the circulation of false and malicious reports (see 1 Peter 4:14).

Son of man’s. See on Mark 2:10.

24. Woe unto you. The contrast of blessing and woe seems to have been a characteristic Jewish literary device, and originated, probably, with the blessings and the curses of Deuteronomy (chs. 27 and 28). Compare also Christ’s woes upon the scribes and the Pharisees (see Matt. 23).

Rich. Jesus’ low estimate of the material things of life (see on Matt. 5:3) alienated the affections of the class of society that considered wealth and prestige to be the main objectives of life (see Matt. 6:1–6; etc.), though the Saviour sought to bring salvation to all classes of society, rich as well as poor. In fact, comparatively few of the wealthy class became Jesus’ friends, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea being notable exceptions. Jesus was concerned with leading men to lay up treasure in heaven rather than on earth (see Matt. 6:33, 34; Luke 12:13–33), in order that their hearts might be the more closely attached to heaven. In too many cases riches proved to be, to their possessors, an insuperable barrier to heaven (see Mark 10:23, 25; Luke 18:24, 25).

Received. Gr. *apechō*. As illustrated by the papyri this term may indicate, in a context such as this, payment in full.

Consolation. Gr. *paraklēsis*, here meaning solace or cheer that comes from a happy state of things (see on Matt. 5:4).

25. Full. That is, sated with the good things of this life (cf. ch. 16:19–31).

26. Speak well of you. Precisely the opposite of “reproach you” (v. 22). Here is another of the paradoxes that emphasize the great difference between Christianity and the world, between its ideals and those of the world. Men usually “speak well” of those who possess wealth or power, and who are in a position to respond to flattery in such a way as to benefit the flatterer.

So did their fathers. Compare this with the ill-treatment their ancestors had accorded to the prophets of the Lord (v. 23).

27. But I say unto you. See on Matt. 5:22.

Love your enemies. See on Matt. 5:43, 44.

28. Bless them that curse you. See on Matt. 5:43.

Despitefully use you. Or, “abuse you” (see on Matt. 5:43, 44).

29. Him that smiteth thee. See on Matt. 5:39.

30. Give to every man. The tense of the Greek verbs translated “give,” “taketh away,” and “ask” expresses repeated or habitual action. The admonition to “give to every man that asketh” does not mean to give him everything he asks for, nor does it require one to give something every time he is asked. As the verb form makes clear, and as the general tenor of the entire Sermon on the Mount makes evident, Christ means that giving should become habitual with us. Christ’s admonition does not mean that a Christian is obliged to give indiscriminately, irrespective of need. He will, rather, have a generous spirit that is ready and glad to give—according to the need represented by the request and his own ability to meet that need (see on Matt. 5:42). A Christian will, as a rule, respond favorably to requests that come to him for help. He will not, as is the custom of men with unregenerate hearts, be unwilling to give or refuse to give. He will be disposed to cooperate with others rather than to oppose them.

31. As ye would. See on Matt. 7:12.

32. Love them which love you. See on Matt. 5:43–47.

Sinners. According to the Jews, a “sinner” was one who either did not know the law at all or who knew it but would not obey it. All Gentiles were thus sinners, along with those among the Jews who became tax collectors, harlots, etc.

33. Do good. See on Matt. 5:44–46.

34. Lend to them. Matthew does not report the sequence on lending. This lending refers to business transactions in which money is lent on interest.

Receive as much again. That is, get back the principal, and with it, of course, the stipulated interest.

35. Love ye your enemies. See on Matt. 5:44–46.

Hoping. Gr. *apelpizō*, a word occurring nowhere else in the NT. In Greek literature it always means “to despair,” or “to give up in despair.” There is some textual evidence (cf. p. 146) for the reading “despairing of no one,” though the evidence seems to favor the reading “despairing of nothing.” Commentators generally suggest “never despairing” as the best rendering, or, “giving up nothing in despair.” However, the contrast here seems

to demand a phrase opposite to “ye hope to receive” (v. 34), and hence there may be some justification for the translation “hoping for nothing.” There is some textual evidence (cf. p. 146) for reading “disappointing no man.” The KJV translation is based on the Vulgate, which reads, “hoping for nothing thence.” On the basis of the Vulgate the Catholic Church for centuries prohibited lending money on interest, and as a result the Jews became the great moneylenders and bankers of Europe. For a discussion of Bible principles with regard to lending money on interest, see on Ex. 22:25.

The context of Luke 6:30–35 makes it clear that Christ does not refer here to interest on loans, but rather to the great principle that Christians should give to others (v. 30), treat others equitably (v. 31), do good to others (vs. 31, 35), and love others (v. 32)—without calculating in advance the probability of getting the same or more in return. Christians are to help even apparently hopeless cases (*apelpizō* is used in Greek literature of a physician despairing of an apparently helpless and hopeless case). Help is to be based on *need*, not on the anticipation of getting a return on the investment of good deeds. The Christian is never to be “weary in well doing” (Gal. 6:9), nor should he feel that his labor is “in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Your reward. Christ held forth rewards for right living, not primarily as incentives—yet rightly understood, they are properly incentives—but to demonstrate that though men may not appreciate the high principles on which citizens of the heavenly kingdom operate, God nevertheless knows and appreciates. He will eventually bring the reign of sin to an end and will reconstitute the affairs of this world in harmony with the very principles for which His “sons” endure injustice in this present world. The highest motive of a Christian is not to live the better life in order to acquire certain rewards, though these properly have their place, but rather to live the better life in recognition of the fact that in and of itself it is a better life. A Christian finds ultimate satisfaction in living in harmony with the great eternal principles of the kingdom of heaven.

Children. Their moral likeness to God proves them to be His children. They are His sons because they think, speak, and live in harmony with His principles (see on Matt. 5:45).

The Highest. Gr. *Hupsistos*. “Children of the Highest” of Luke is equivalent to “children of your Father” of Matt. 5:45. The Hebrew equivalent of *Hupsistos* is *Elyon* (see on Gen. 14:18; Num. 24:16).

The unthankful. Christ is not so much concerned with the fact that these persons do not express appreciation for the kindnesses shown them by citizens of the kingdom of heaven, as He is with the basic attitude of the thankless. Even so, God is still kind to them, and the sons of God on earth—those who resemble their heavenly Father in moral character—will do likewise. See on John 8:44.

The evil. In Greek the definite article “the” is not repeated. The entire phrase reads literally, “to the ungracious and evil [ones].” The “ungracious” and “evil” are here treated as one group of people, not two separate groups. The kindnesses God extends are based on His own graciousness as giver, not on any graciousness on the part of the recipients. It is sometimes the case that graciousness extended to the most unworthy and unappreciative individual awakens in him a desire to escape from the bonds of sin, and ultimately brings about a transformation of his character.

36. Merciful. Or, “compassionate.” How deserving the fellow men may or may not be in no way determines the Christian’s attitude and actions toward them. The motive power for this kind of living lies in the Christian’s sonship to God through Christ, whose love “constrains” or controls him (see 2 Cor. 5:14).

37. Judge not. See on Matt. 7:1, 2.

Forgive. See on Matt. 6:14, 15.

38. Bosom. Gr. *kolpos*. Either the breast, or the fold made in the wide, outer garment by tucking it into the girdle, thus making a hollow or pocket (see Ex. 4:6; Ps. 79:12; Prov. 6:27; Jer. 32:18; see on Ps. 65:6).

With the same measure. See on Matt. 7:2.

39. He spake a parable. This is generally considered to mark the beginning of the second section of the Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Luke. Sixteen of the illustrations used in this sermon, as told by Matthew and Luke, may be classed as “parables,” though only the one here given is so designated. For a definition of parables see p. 203.

Can the blind lead? The form of the question in Greek implies that a negative answer is expected. A blind person is not a fit guide for another blind person.

Shall they not? Here the form of the question in Greek implies that an affirmative answer is expected. Some misfortune is sure to result.

Ditch. Preferably, “pit.”

40. The disciple. That is, the learner is not above the teacher. This is similar to our proverb about a stream not rising higher than its source. The Chinese have a proverb to the effect that “a student cannot excel his teacher.” In its contextual relationship to v. 39, the proverb about the student and his teacher equates the “master” with the blind man who attempts to lead, or instruct, another blind man, and the “disciple” with the one being led. The moral is simply that those who would pose as teachers of others must have clear insight into the matters concerning which they propose to give instruction. Unless they do, those they teach can at best reach a low standard.

This “parable” illustrates the same lesson set forth in the metaphor of vs. 41, 42, about the man who proposes to pull a speck or splinter out of his brother’s eye when there is a beam or log in his own. A man must see himself clearly before he can be of any help to others.

Perfect. Gr. *katartizō*, “to prepare,” “to train,” “to furnish thoroughly.” Hence, “fully taught” (RSV). It is also used as a medical term to describe setting a bone or a joint.

Shall be as his master. That is, no better than his master (cf. v. 39).

41. Mote. See on Matt. 7:3.

Perceivest. Gr. *katanoēō*, literally, “to fix the mind upon”; hence, “to consider attentively,” or “to perceive.”

42. Let me pull. See on Matt. 7:4. The man with the beam in his eye speaks with studied courtesy to the one with the mote in his eye, as if offering to do him a favor. He pretends to be a “brother” to the man, when in reality he is a “hypocrite.”

Thou hypocrite. See on Matt. 7:5.

44. Known. See on Matt. 7:16.

45. A good man. See on Matt. 7:12, 16.

46. Lord, Lord. See on Matt. 7:21, 22.

47. Whosoever cometh to me. That is, whoever would be my disciple—like the Twelve chosen earlier that very day, and now sitting next to Christ (see on Matt. 5:1).

48. Built an house. See on Matt. 7:24, 25.

Dugged deep. Literally, “dug, and went down deep.”

Could not shake it. That is, was not strong enough to shake it.

Founded upon a rock. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading “well built.”

49. Heareth, and doeth not. See on Matt. 7:26.

Fell. Rather, “fell together,” or “collapsed” (see on Matt. 7:27).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3, 4 DA 285

12 DA 292, 362; Ev 663; GW 256; 2T 202; 3T 322, 379; 4T 373, 528; 5T 385

12, 13 MB 4

12–16DA 290–297

16 GC 43

17–19DA 298; MB 4

22, 23 1T 285; 2T 491

24 2T 492

26 GC 144; 8T 124; 2T 491

31 CG 260; CSW 178; Ed 292

35 DA 311; MB 73, 76; MH 208

35, 36 MH 423; 8T 286

36 CS 164; 6T 284

38 AA 345; COL 86, 374; CS 36, 50; DA 249, 371; Ed 103, 140; FE 338; MB 20; MH 208; PK 234

43 MB 127

48 4T 117

48, 49 DA 599

CHAPTER 7

1 Christ findeth a greater faith in the centurion a Gentile, than in any of the Jews: 10 healeth his servant being absent: 11 raiseth from death the widow's son at Nain: 19 answereth John's messengers with the declaration of his miracles: 24 testifieth to the people what opinion he held of John: 30 inveigheth against the Jews, who with neither the manners of John nor of Jesus could be won: 36 and sheweth by occasion of Mary Magdalene, how he is a friend to sinners, not to maintain them in sins, but to forgive them their sins, upon their faith and repentance.

1. When. [*The Centurion's Slave, Luke 7:1–10=Matt. 8:5–13.* Major comment: Luke. See Middle Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Or, “after.” The events of vs. 1–10 followed the Sermon on the Mount in close chronological sequence (see on Matt. 8:2), and may have occurred on the same day. Luke 7:1 provides the transition from the place where the Sermon on the Mount was given to that where the centurion's servant was healed. For other instances of sequence transition in Luke see chs. 4:30, 37, 44; 5:11, 16, 26; 6:11; etc. It was now probably the late summer of A.D. 29 (see MB 2, 45; see on Matt. 5:1), and the time of day, perhaps late afternoon.

His sayings. Specifically, the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 6:20–49; cf. Matt. 7:28).

In the audience. Or, “in the ears,” that is, “in the hearing.” An “audience” is a group of “hearers.”

Entered into Capernaum. Apparently upon His return from giving the Sermon on the Mount, as the context implies (see DA 316). On Capernaum as the headquarters for the Galilean ministry see on Matt. 4:13. It seems that the deputation of elders bearing the centurion’s request met Jesus as He returned to the city.

The parallel account in Matt. 8:5–13 appears to have a number of differences, but a comparison of the two accounts makes it evident that these are not discrepancies, and that the two accounts are simply different versions of the same incident. The conversational portions of both accounts are almost identical, and the differences occur mainly in the narrative sections. In both instances the focal point of interest is the great faith of the centurion, a Gentile (see on Luke 7:9). The unusual circumstance of the miracle is the fact that the one benefited by it was not in the immediate presence of Christ at the moment of healing.

2. Centurion’s. Gr. *hekatontarchos*, means “commander of a hundred [men]”; that is, a captain of a group in the Roman army called a century. The number of soldiers in a century varied from 50 to 100. This particular centurion was probably in charge of a company of Roman soldiers on police duty for Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. As becomes evident during the course of the narrative (see on vs. 5, 6, 9), the centurion was not a Jewish proselyte. All the centurions mentioned in the NT seem to have been men of commendable character (Mark 15:39, 44, 45; Luke 23:47; Acts 10:22; 22:26; 23:17, 23, 24; 24:23; 27:43). The word “certain” refers to the centurion, not to the servant.

Servant. Gr. *doulos*, literally, “a slave,” or “a bond servant.”

Dear. Gr. *entimos*, “in honor,” “honored,” or “prized.” In ch. 14:8 *entimos* is translated “honourable,” in Phil. 2:29, “in reputation,” and in 1 Peter 2:4, 6, “precious.”

Entimos appears in the papyri in reference to soldiers of long and distinguished service. This “servant” was held in high esteem by the centurion, doubtless for the valuable service he had rendered. The term itself may or may not imply personal affection, but in this particular case the centurion was “tenderly attached” to the slave (DA 315).

Was sick. See on Matt. 4:24. Ordinary paralysis is not usually so painful as the words “grievously tormented” (Matt. 8:6) imply, and it has therefore been suggested that the slave’s acute pain and paralysis accompanied some disease akin to rheumatic fever.

Ready to die. That is, “about to die.”

3. When he heard. The centurion’s knowledge of Jesus was limited to the reports that had reached him of the Saviour’s great deeds. He had never seen Jesus previous to the present occasion (DA 315).

The elders. These may have been either the leading citizens of the town or the board of elders of the local synagogue (see p. 56), or they may have served in both capacities. Owing to the friendly gestures of the centurion (see v. 5), he was on particularly good terms with the “elders” despite the fact that he was a Gentile and not a Jew. Fully aware of the usual Jewish attitude toward Gentiles (see on Matt. 7:6), the centurion may have been uncertain as to how Jesus would respond to a request coming directly from one not of His own race. Having had, perhaps, unpleasant experiences with various Jewish leaders in the past, he may have feared a rebuff. In typically Oriental fashion, also, the correct procedure would be to make arrangements through a middleman, who,

presumably, was in a position to provide for things that might otherwise be refused. Possibly these were the “elders” of the very synagogue Jesus usually attended when in Capernaum (see on Luke 4:16).

The most apparent difference between the accounts of Matthew and Luke occurs at this point in the narrative. Luke records the sending of two delegations by the centurion—“elders” (v. 3) and by the “friends” (v. 6)—whereas Matthew mentions neither. The latter speaks only of the centurion himself coming to Jesus (ch. 8:5). It is probable that Matthew, bearing in mind the fact that the delegations actually spoke for the centurion, simplifies his account by presenting the words of the messengers on behalf of the centurion as if they had been spoken by the centurion himself in person. Today, as in ancient times, a man in authority is commonly said to do certain things when, in fact, the actual work is done by his subordinates. Pilate, for instance, is said to have scourged Jesus (John 19:1). But the actual scourging was, of course, administered by a subordinate, at Pilate’s order. Apparently the two delegations, the “elders” and the “friends,” approached Jesus, but when it became evident that He was continuing on His way to the centurion’s home, the latter came out in person, and when he met Jesus, repeated practically the same message he had sent by the “elders” and “friends.” Furthermore, Luke had special reasons for mentioning any friendly act on the part of the leaders of Israel toward Jesus (see Additional Note at end of chapter). See on Luke 5:2.

Beseeking. Or, “asking,” “entreating.”

Heal. Gr. *diasōzo*, “to bring safely through,” “to save.” The centurion wanted Jesus to bring his faithful slave safely through his illness.

4. Besought. Gr. *parakaleō*, a stronger word than that used in v. 3, which means merely “ask,” or “request” (see on v. 3).

Instantly. Gr. *spoudaiōs*, “earnestly,” or “urgently”. This was one of the meanings that the word “instantly” formerly conveyed (see Rom. 12:12). The matter was urgent because the man was “ready to die” and time was short.

Was worthy. In the centurion’s own eyes he was unworthy (vs. 6, 7). In the eyes of the “elders” he was “worthy” (v. 4). A consciousness of one’s own unworthiness is a recommendation of the highest order. But with the centurion it seems that this appraisal of his status before Jesus was more than humility. Though a believer in the true God, the centurion was not yet a full proselyte, and accordingly in Jewish eyes still a heathen and therefore not eligible to participate in religious services (see on vs. 2, 5). Truly humble of heart before God, and probably conscious as well of his status in the eyes of the Jews, he sought to avoid embarrassing Jesus by obligating Him to enter a Gentile home. This would at best be repulsive to a pious Jew and would doubtless render him ceremonially unclean (see John 18:28). A Jew summoned by a direct command of a Roman officer would be obligated to comply with the summons, for to refuse would be interpreted as resistance to lawfully constituted authority. Evidently the truly devout and humble centurion sought to spare Jesus this and avoid embarrassing Him. The centurion’s humility was both real and practical (see on Luke 7:6).

He should do this. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 146) the reading “you [Jesus] should do this.”

5. He loveth our nation. And was, in the light of this, “worthy” in the eyes of the elders (see on v. 4). It seems that the centurion was, in all probability, what was known as

a “proselyte of the gate,” one who believed in the true God and in the tenets of the Jewish faith but who had not accepted circumcision, the sign of the covenant (see on Gen. 17:10, 11), and did not practice the ceremonial ritual of the Jewish religion. It is said that during the first century A.D. there were unnumbered thousands of Gentiles throughout the Roman Empire who had become “proselytes of the gate.” They had learned to admire and respect the comparatively pure worship of the Jews and were convinced of its superiority to their own. Many such proselytes later became full-fledged Jews (see p. 62).

A synagogue. Literally, “the synagogue”; probably the very one for which these messengers served as “elders.” It may have been the one Christ commonly attended while in Capernaum, and where He began His ministry there. The pronoun “he” is emphatic—probably the centurion had built this synagogue at his own expense. According to a 2d-century inscription, a certain pagan official of Egypt assisted the Jews in the erection of a synagogue at Athribis. Other similar instances are on record.

6. Went. According to the Greek, “was proceeding.” He did not accompany them all the way back to the centurion’s home, as the narrative makes evident (see Luke 7:7; cf. Matt. 8:5).

Friends. This second delegation may have been composed of Romans, perhaps personal associates of the centurion. Apparently Jesus kept moving toward the centurion’s home in spite of the proxy protest of his unworthiness, for the centurion himself finally came out (DA 316). In view of the fact that the second delegation intercepted Jesus “not far from the house,” and that Jesus advanced yet closer after receiving the second delegation, the centurion must have met Jesus very near his home.

I am not worthy. See on v. 4. Though the centurion protested his own unworthiness, Jesus later said of him, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (v. 9). The remarkable faith of this supposed heathen made him more worthy in the sight of Heaven than any of Jesus’ fellow countrymen. It is of more than passing interest to find that Jesus and the Jewish leaders, who so frequently found themselves in complete disagreement, should both affirm the worthiness of a Gentile. To be sure, their reasons for doing so were not the same; the “elders” approved of the centurion’s works; Jesus, of his faith. Perhaps herein is implied the truth that when faith and works are blended in the life, a man may be highly esteemed by both God and man. Rare is the leader who is esteemed by friends and foes alike, by men of different parties or shades of thought. Rare is the teacher who is held in honor by all his students, those to whom he of necessity gives low grades as well as those to whom he gives high. Rare is the pastor who is favored by all segments in his congregation.

Roof. Gr. *stegē*, “a covering.”

7. Worthy. See on vs. 4, 6. Perhaps the conscientious scruples with respect to what the centurion mistakenly thought to be the attitude of Jesus toward Gentiles (see on v. 4) had kept him from presuming upon the good will of Jesus, even so far as to appear before Him in person. However, he did come to Jesus, and vs. 7, 8 represent what he said in person to the Lord (see DA 316).

In a word. The centurion considered the command of Jesus with regard to the healing of the slave sufficient to accomplish what he now requested. It was this that marked the extent of the centurion’s faith. Unlike the nobleman of Capernaum a year earlier, the centurion did not demand or even expect “signs and wonders” to strengthen his confidence in the power of Jesus (see on John 4:48).

Shall be healed. Like the leper whose great faith led him to exclaim, “If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean” (Matt. 8:2), the centurion seemed to realize that all that was necessary was for Jesus to *will* that the slave be released from the clutches of disease.

8. I also. The centurion had come to recognize from what he had heard that Jesus represented the authority and power of Heaven in the same way that he, as an army officer, represented the power and authority of Rome.

Under me soldiers. As the centurion was a representative of the Roman government, and yielded obedience to its commands, so the soldiers under him recognized his authority and obeyed him. He knew both how to receive and how to issue orders and see that they were carried out. A word from his superiors secured his obedience, and a word from him secured the obedience of his subordinates. Having already learned to recognize the true God as ruler of heaven and earth, the centurion now recognized Jesus as the representative of God. The centurion knew, no doubt, of the healing of the nobleman’s son a year earlier (see John 4:46–53), and must have heard of the many miracles Jesus had performed since making Capernaum the center of His ministry in Galilee. As in the case of the nobleman (John 4:50), a word from Jesus would be sufficient, and healing could be accomplished at a distance. As in the case of the leper, however, the question in the mind of the centurion was whether Jesus would be *willing* to respond to the request (see on Mark 1:40). The leper was an outcast from society because of his disease. Similarly, the centurion probably felt that he was not socially acceptable to the Jews because of his race.

9. Marvelled. Gr. *thaumazō*, “to wonder,” or “to marvel.” The centurion’s faith that a word from Jesus would be sufficient was extraordinary in itself. The fact that the centurion had never seen or conversed with Jesus made that faith all the more remarkable, particularly in view of the slowness of the Jews and even of Christ’s own disciples to exercise faith (Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 16:8; see Mark 4:40; Luke 8:25; 12:28; 17:6). But the fact that the centurion was—officially, from the Jewish standpoint—a Gentile, made his faith seem great, almost beyond belief. A year later Jesus commended the Syrophoenician woman for her great faith (see Matt. 15:28), and she, too, was a Gentile (cf. Luke 4:24–27).

People that followed. In all probability this was the throng that had, perhaps that very day, listened to the Sermon on the Mount (see on Matt. 8:1; Luke 7:1). If so, this miracle would tend to confirm the words Jesus had spoken and to leave a vivid impression on the minds of the people.

So great faith. See on v. 8. The great faith of the centurion is the climax of the narrative. Christ’s commendation of the centurion may be taken as implying his complete conversion, either now or at a later time. The fact that Christ had “not found” faith of this magnitude implies prior ministry covering a considerable period of time (see on v. 1).

Not in Israel. Or, “not even in Israel.” Luke here omits Christ’s comment, recorded by Matthew in ch. 8:11, 12, concerning the great in gathering of the Gentiles into the kingdom of heaven, but records a similar statement on another occasion (Luke 13:28, 29). Paul later expressed the same truth in a similar way (see Rom. 9:7, 8; 11:15, 17, 25). It is worthy of note that in the two instances of healing performed at the request of Gentiles—the one here recorded and that of the Syrophoenician’s daughter (Matt. 15:21–28)—the healing occurred, not only as a reward of “great faith,” but at a distance. Hence there was little contact with the Gentiles. Perhaps this may have been a concession to the prejudices

of the disciples. It was essential, in preparation for the work of the gospel in all the world, that Jesus demonstrate the eligibility of Gentiles to share in the benefits of the kingdom He had come to establish, but it was not essential that the Lord go out of His way unnecessarily to offend Jewish sensitiveness to social contact with the Gentiles. To have done other than He did would have been to arouse Jewish prejudice and hinder His mission. In his ministry for souls a minister, though himself free of prejudice, may often find it necessary to take into account the prejudices of others.

10. They that were sent. Probably including both the “elders” and the “friends,” at least the latter. They did not have far to go (see on v. 6), and could verify the miracle immediately.

Whole. From the Gr. *hugiainō*, “to be in health,” a common medical term (cf. Luke 5:31; 3 John 2).

That had been sick. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of these words.

11. The day after. [*The Son of the Widow at Nain*, Luke 7:11–17. See Middle Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading “soon after.” Most modern scholars consider the former reading to be more in keeping with the style Luke commonly employs in writing.

He went. Thus begins the second great missionary journey through the towns and villages of Galilee, probably during the early autumn of A.D. 29 (see on Matt. 4:12; Matt. 5:1; Mark 1:39). The second tour began at Capernaum, Jesus’ headquarters during His ministry in Galilee (see on Matt. 4:13), at most but a few days after the appointment of the twelve disciples and the giving of the Sermon on the Mount (see on Matt. 5:1; Luke 7:1). The first tour had been conducted earlier during the same summer (see on Matt. 4:23; Mark 1:39; 2:1; Luke 4:16).

Having formally inaugurated the kingdom of divine grace with the appointment of the Twelve (see on Matt. 5:1), and having proclaimed the fundamental law and purpose of the kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ now set forth on His second tour through Galilee to demonstrate by precept and example the nature of His kingdom and the scope of its benefits to mankind.

As with the first tour (see on Mark 1:39, 40), it is evident that only the more significant and impressive incidents are recorded by the gospel writers (cf. John 20:30, 31; 21:25). The first village mentioned on this journey is Nain (see under “Nain”), though Jesus probably ministered to the needs of the people and taught in other villages along the way. Whether He took a direct or more circuitous route is uncertain, though the latter would seem the more probable. Whether “much people” accompanied Jesus on His tour beyond Nain is not clear.

After the miracle at Nain came the day of ministry somewhere along the western shore of the Lake of Galilee, during the course of which Christ spoke the parables recorded in Matt. 13. That evening, as Christ and the disciples crossed the lake, the great storm arose (see on Matt. 8:23–27), and the following morning came the encounter with the Gadarene demoniacs (see on Mark 5:1–20). Later that day Jesus returned to Capernaum to attend the feast at Matthew’s home (Mark 2:15–17; see DA 342), healed the woman who touched the hem of His garment, and raised Jairus’ daughter (see on Mark 5:21–43). Thus, on the second tour, Jesus demonstrated His power over death, over

the elements of nature, and over evil spirits; and in the series of parables set forth the principles of the kingdom of heaven and its operation among men. On this tour the Twelve, as His assistants, received a priceless training in methods of evangelism, a training which soon, in the third tour, they had the opportunity to put into practice.

Nain. This town is not mentioned elsewhere, either in the Bible or in secular sources, but is generally identified with the modern *Nein*, on the northern slopes of a mountain overlooking the broad plain of Esdraelon to the north. *Nein* is about 25 mi. (40 km.) southwest of the site of ancient Capernaum and about 5 mi. (8 km.) southeast of Nazareth. There is but one approach to the village, along a steep and rocky path (see DA 318) that comes in from the east. Just east of the village is a rockhewn burial ground still in use today.

12. Nigh to the gate. The local cemetery lay about half a mile east of Nain, beside the only pathway up to the village (see on v. 11). The rock-hewn tombs still stand beside the pathway, about ten minutes' walk east of the village. This marks the first occasion in the gospel narrative when the Lord of life came face to face with death and triumphed over it.

Only. Gr. *monogenēs*, "only," or "an only one of a kind" (see on John 1:14).

Widow. The fact that the woman was a widow, and this her only son, made the situation pathetic in the extreme.

Much people of the city. Evidently the widow's extremity touched the hearts of the villagers, and many if not most of them accompanied her to the burial site. Their sympathy was met by the sympathy of the great Life-giver.

13. The Lord. This is one of the comparatively few instances where the gospel writers speak about Jesus as "Lord."

Had compassion. The love and pity of Jesus are often mentioned as motives for the performance of miracles (see Matt. 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 8:2; etc.). No request came from her lips and, so far as we know, no petition arose from her heart. But in His sympathy for suffering humanity Jesus answered the unuttered prayer, as He does so often for us today.

Weep not. Or, "stop weeping." The widow had ample reason for her deep sorrow. But Jesus was about to give her reason for the greatest possible joy, and it was not appropriate that she should continue weeping, unless it be with tears of joy. Similarly, before raising Lazarus, Jesus sought to inspire hope and trust in advance of performing the miracle of imparting life (see John 11:23–27).

14. Touched the bier. The bier, an open coffin with the corpse shrouded in folds of linen, led the funeral procession (see DA 318). In Bible times such a "bier" was probably made of wickerwork (see on Mark 6:43). The touch of Jesus on the coffin was a signal to the pallbearers to halt. According to the law of Moses, contact with the dead in any way, such as even touching the bier, brought ceremonial defilement for seven days (see on Num. 19:11). But to Jesus, who knew neither sin nor defilement, and who was the Source of life, there could be no defilement from contact with death.

I say unto thee. In the Greek the word "thee" is emphatic: "To *thee* I say, Arise!" To the mother, Jesus had just said, "Weep not." He had the right to bid her to weep no more because He had the power to rebuke death, the cause of her weeping.

15. Delivered. Literally, “gave.” In death the son had been lost to his widowed mother, and she had no means of reclaiming him. Now the Life-giver came and restored him to her. Compare the restoration of the lunatic son to his father (ch. 9:42).

16. There came a fear on all. Or, “fear seized all.”

Glorified God. According to the Greek they continued to praise God. When the people recovered from fear their next thought was to praise God.

A great prophet. This experience no doubt reminded them of similar incidents in olden times. Here was incontestable evidence of divine power; and the people concluded that the human agent through whom it was manifested must be a “prophet.” Compare also the Messianic promise of Deut. 18:15, and the reaction of the Jews to John (see John 1:21) and later to Jesus (see John 6:14; cf. chs. 4:19; 7:40).

Every Christian who mourns the loss of dear ones can find consolation in the compassion Jesus felt for the widow of Nain (see on v. 13), and has the privilege of comfort in the fact that the same Jesus still “watches with every mourning one beside the bier” (DA 319). He who holds in His hands the keys of death and the grave (Rev. 1:18) will one day break the bonds that bind His loved ones and set them forever free from the clutches of this great enemy of the human race (see 1 Cor. 15:26; 2 Tim. 1:10).

17. Rumour. Rather, “word,” or “report.” News of what had happened spread far and wide throughout the surrounding region.

Judæa. By this term Luke refers to all of Palestine, including Galilee and Peraea as well as what we commonly think of as Judea (see on ch. 1:5).

18. Disciples of John. [*The Inquiry by John’s Disciples*, Luke 7:18–23=Matt. 11:2–6. Major comment: Luke. See Middle Galilean Ministry.] Perplexed, John’s disciples related to him the “rumour,” or “report,” of all the wonderful works of Jesus. The insertion of this statement at this point suggests that it was specifically the report of the raising of the young man at Nain that prompted John to send some of his disciples to Jesus with a question (see v. 19). By this time John had been in prison for about six months, and was to remain there for about another six months before his execution (see on Matt. 4:12; Luke 3:19, 20).

19. Two of his disciples. Literally, “a certain two of his disciples.” The question regarding the Messiahship of Jesus originated with John’s disciples, not with John himself (see DA 214, 215), and John was disturbed that these men should cherish unbelief with respect to John’s own testimony that Jesus was indeed the Promised One (see DA 216). If the Baptist’s own disciples doubted his message, how could others be expected to believe? There were some things John did not understand—such as the true nature of the Messianic kingdom, and why Jesus did nothing to effect his release from prison. But despite the doubts that troubled him, he did not surrender his faith that Jesus was indeed the Christ (see DA 216; cf. v. 24). Disappointment and anxiety troubled the soul of the lonely prisoner, but he refrained from discussing these perplexities of his own mind with his disciples.

Sent them to Jesus. In the hope that a personal interview with Jesus would confirm their faith, that they would bring back a faith-strengthening message for his other disciples, and that he might receive a personal message to clarify his own thinking, John sent the two men to Jesus. If John was in the dungeon of Machaerus on the eastern side of the Dead Sea (see on ch. 3:20), the two messengers would probably follow the road through the Jordan valley, and once in Galilee could easily make inquiry as to where

Jesus might be at the time. They must have walked at least 75 mi. in each direction, and have spent about three days each way. This means that they were gone at least a full week and perhaps more, counting the day they spent with Jesus, for no doubt they would not travel on the Sabbath.

Art thou? In the Greek the word “thou” is emphatic.

He that should come. Gr. *ho erchomenos*, which was often used as a Messianic expression, perhaps based originally on Ps. 118:26 (see also Matt. 3:11; 21:9; Mark 11:9; Luke 19:38; see on John 6:14; 11:27). *Ho erchomenos* is also used of Christ in reference to His second coming (see Matt. 23:39; Luke 13:35; Heb. 10:37; Rev. 1:4, 8).

God permits hours of perplexity to come even to the most worthy and trusted of His servants, in order to strengthen their faith and trust in Him. At times, when it is necessary for their own character development or for the good of God’s cause on earth, He permits them to go through experiences that seem to suggest that He has forgotten them. Thus it was with Jesus when He hung upon the cross (see Matt. 27:46; DA 753, 754). Thus it was with Job (see Job 1:21; 13:15). Even Elijah, the prototype of John the Baptist (see on Mal. 4:5; Matt. 17:10), had his moments of discouragement (see 1 Kings 19:4). In view of this, it can be easily understood that the experience of John in prison for a period of about one year was, in the merciful providence of God, permitted by way of encouragement to countless thousands of others who, in later years, must suffer martyrdom (see DA 224). Knowing that John’s faith would not fail (see 1 Cor. 10:13), God strengthened the prophet to endure. Steadfast to the end, John, even in prison and in death, stands forth as “a burning and a shining light” (John 5:35), his fortitude and patience illuminating the dark pathway of life for martyrs of Jesus down through the centuries.

It is appropriate to inquire how John was able to say, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30), and to accept without murmuring the lonely months in the dungeon, and eventually death at the hands of Herod. The secret was that “the touch of divine love had transformed him” (DA 179)—his heart was right. He was willing to be faithful to his mission in spite of the fact that to some extent he misconstrued the nature of Christ’s kingdom, a misconception he shared with his contemporaries (DA 215). Even the disciples of Jesus, after the resurrection, thought that He was about to establish His glorious kingdom on earth (Acts 1:6; cf. Matt. 24:3). Christ told the Pharisees, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: ... for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20, 21). How often has it been true that perplexity has arisen from a misunderstanding of a statement in Bible prophecy! It was the preconceived opinions of the disciples, in spite of what their Lord had sought to teach them, that made His death and burial so bitter an experience for them (DA 412, 772, 796). Their experience may well be a lesson to us today to study with all diligence the messages that Inspiration has sent with regard to the hour of crisis that lies ahead of us (GC 594, 598; TM 116).

Another. What Jesus said and did—His sermons and His miracles—was not exactly what John had expected. Jesus seemed content to gather about Him a band of disciples and to go about the country teaching and healing the people (see DA 215). John was tormented with doubt as to whether Jesus was the Messiah, because He did not conform to the popular conception of what the Messiah would be like and would do when He came. John’s question, rephrased, was this: “Are you the kind of Messiah we are to look for?”

20. *Hath sent us.* The two messengers were probably unaware of the fact that they had been sent primarily for their own benefit (see on v. 19). John probably desired also to prepare them for the transfer of their affections and service to Jesus. No doubt these two men were among the disciples of Jesus who, some six months later, cast their lot with Christ (see DA 361).

21. *In that same hour.* The two messengers found Jesus amid the throngs of people somewhere in Galilee. Sufferers from various diseases were pressing through the crowd to where the Master stood or sat (see DA 216). Greeting John's disciples courteously, no doubt, Jesus avoided answering their question and quietly went about His work of healing.

Christ's method of answering the question posed by the two messengers, like all of His methods, is one of major importance to ministers and teachers. He might, upon this occasion, have given a good, practical theological answer, supported by numerous quotations from the prophets, but He did not do so. There was "a more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31), and one that was at the same time far more impressive and more permanent in its results. It is worthy of note that the supreme evidence Christ offered of His divinity was the perfect adaptation of His ministry to the need of suffering and lost humanity (see DA 217; cf. 406, 407).

Christ did not always use the method He here employed in meeting the disciples of John. Upon a later occasion, following His resurrection, He hid His identity from the natural vision of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, in order to direct their spiritual eyesight to the fact that events connected with His death and resurrection were in fulfillment of prophecy. His practical instruction in the Scriptures provided, in this instance, the very strongest possible evidence why His followers should have faith in Him (see DA 799).

The two messengers sent by John had heard the "rumour," or "report," of the ministry of Jesus (vs. 17, 18); now they saw for themselves, and could no longer doubt the truth of what they had heard. Christ's method of answering them also illustrates another important principle of teaching truth—He presented the evidence and let John's disciples draw their own conclusions. He did not dogmatize, He did not press them to take His word for an answer and assert that anyone who said anything to the contrary was in error. Their minds were left completely free to exercise judgment in the matter on the basis of what prophecy had said the Messiah would do (see on v. 22), and what He himself was doing (v. 21).

Infirmities and plagues. See on Matt. 4:23; Mark 3:10.

Evil spirits. It is important to note that Luke the physician carefully distinguishes between those who are demon possessed and those whose affliction is limited to the physical being. This fact precludes the possibility that he confused the two, as some have asserted (see vs. 6:17, 18; 7:2; 8:27–36; Additional Note on Mark 1).

Gave. Gr. *charizomai*, "to do a favor," or "to give graciously"; from *charis*, "grace," or "favor" (see on ch. 1:30). When Jesus restored others to health His act was not perfunctory or mechanical; it was, rather, an expression of the sympathetic interest and feeling of His great heart of love for all men.

22. *Jesus answering said.* Toward the close of the day Jesus turned to the two messengers and gave them a message to bear back to the one who had sent them, a message that proved sufficient to answer the questionings of John and his disciples (see

DA 217). All doubts were set at rest, even though there might yet be aspects of Christ's kingdom that were not completely understood.

Tell John. Christ's answer to the question of the two disciples of John is a paraphrase of Isa. 61:1, a passage recognized by the Jews of Christ's day as definitely Messianic (see on Luke 4:18–21). No more impressive answer could have been given.

Christ did not mention the "day of vengeance," either at Nazareth or upon this occasion (see Isa. 61:2; Luke 4:19). In His message to John, Jesus also said nothing of "liberty" for the "captives" (Isa. 61:1). Such a reference could easily be misunderstood and might stir a false hope in John's heart for release from prison. Implied in Christ's answer was the unspoken explanation that He had not come to destroy sinners (see Luke 9:56; John 3:17; 12:47), but to restore them, physically, mentally, and spiritually. He had "come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Jesus' answer to John's question, "Art thou he that should come?" was, so to speak, "Yes, but I am not the kind of Messiah you expected."

Seen and heard. There are no better witnesses than eyewitnesses. Christ made these two messengers eyewitnesses of the work He was doing for men's souls and bodies (cf. Luke 1:2; John 1:14; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:1, 2).

To the poor. The common, illiterate peasants and laborers received little attention from the proud Pharisees and the learned rabbis. Their attention, for the most part, was reserved for men of wealth and influence. The "common people," with their open hearts and simple faith, were the very ones who were attracted to Christ and who "heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37). Often among the Jews of Christ's day, "the poor" not only were poor in worldly goods, but were also oppressed and afflicted at the hands of men in positions of power and influence (see on Matt. 5:3). See p. 55.

Gospel. Or, "good news" (see on Mark 1:1).

23. Blessed is he. Or, "happy is he" (see on Matt. 5:3). In the gracious form of a benediction, yet in words whose meaning would not be lost on John, or on the disciples who bore the message to him, Jesus administered a gentle rebuke (see DA 218). This benediction, following the paraphrase of Isa. 61:1 (see on Luke 7:22), was all that Christ had personally to say to the imprisoned prophet. It was Christ's answer to the unspoken longing of John's heart for a personal word of comfort and cheer (see DA 217). So far as the record of the Gospels goes, this is the last contact between Jesus and John.

Offended. Gr. *skandalizō*, "to cause to stumble," hence, "to offend" (see on Matt. 5:29). Many of the Jews of Christ's day "stumbled at that stumblingstone," or the "rock of offence [Gr. *skandalon*, an object of stumbling]," Jesus (Rom. 9:32, 33), as the prophet Isaiah had said they would (see on Isa. 8:14). Jesus had come to "his own, and his own received him not" (see John 1:11; DA 30, 213, 391–394). At times, even Christ's disciples were "offended" because of Him (see DA 380), and it was because of being "offended" at Jesus that Judas betrayed Him (DA 719). It was because the disciples were "offended" on the night of the betrayal that they all "forsook him and fled" (Matt. 26:31, 56).

24. He began. [*Jesus' Eulogy of John, Luke 7:24–35=Matt. 11:7–30.* Major comment: Matthew.]

25. Gorgeously apparelled. That is, dressed in splendid clothing.

Delicately. That is, "in luxury."

Kings' courts. Or, "palaces."

29. All the people. Some consider vs. 29, 30 an inspired parenthetical comment by Luke rather than a part of Christ's discourse on John the Baptist. An interpolation of this length, however, would be most unusual for Luke. There is no reason why Christ might not have made the statement.

Heard him. That is, heard John the Baptist.

Publicans. See on ch. 3:12.

Justified. Gr. *dikaioō*, here meaning, "to acknowledge God's righteousness." The people "justified God" by responding to the divine message through John the Baptist. They recognized that what John said was true, and that, as a prophet, he had the right to make certain requirements of them.

Baptized. See on Matt. 3:6. The acceptance of baptism at the hands of John was a public acknowledgment of the fact that God spoke through John.

Baptism of John. See on Matt. 3:6. Christian baptism was patterned after the baptism of John (see John 3:22, 23; John 4:1, 2). However, the early Christian church apparently felt that John's baptism alone was not adequate (see Acts 18:25; 19:1–5). His baptism was essentially a symbol of repentance; it was, in fact, called the "baptism of repentance" (Mark 1:4; etc.). Christian baptism typifies repentance (Acts 2:38), and, in addition, belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8:36, 37) plus the reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44–48; 19:1–6). John had, in fact, predicted that Jesus would "baptize" with the Holy Ghost (see Matt. 3:11; cf. Acts 11:16). This does not mean, however, that the baptism of John was without the approval of the Holy Spirit.

30. Pharisees. See pp. 51, 52.

Lawyers. See on Mark 1:22; 2:16. These men were not "lawyers" in the sense that we use the term today. They were students and expositors of Jewish law.

Counsel of God. For each group of people who came to be baptized, John had outlined in detail what they should do to bring forth "fruits meet for repentance" (see on Matt. 3:7, 8; Luke 3:10–14). Though some of the religious leaders were probably baptized, there were at best but few of them who accepted the rite at John's hands. They refused to admit that they were sinners and in need of repentance (see on Matt. 3:6). Inasmuch as the baptism of John signified repentance, a step for which they felt no need, they were "not baptized of him."

Against themselves. Better, "for themselves," or "concerning themselves."

31. The Lord said. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words. They appear in the Vulgate and in later Greek manuscripts. It has been suggested that the phrase was inserted to indicate the belief that vs. 29, 30 were not the words of Jesus, but an editorial comment by Luke (see on v. 29).

36. One of the Pharisees. [*The Feast at Simon's House, Luke 7:36–50=Matt 26:6–13=Mark 14:3–9=John 12:1–9.* Major comment: Matthew and Luke. See Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus; Passion Week; Additional Note at end of chapter.]

Desired. Jesus had cured Simon of the leprosy (Matt. 26:6; DA 557), and he, desiring to express his gratitude, prepared a feast and invited Jesus as the guest of honor. This feast took place in Bethany on the day preceding Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem (DA 557 cf. 569), less than one week prior to the crucifixion. Furthermore, Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead not more than two months previously, during the late winter of A.D. 30–31 (see on John 11:1), was included as a guest of honor along with

Jesus (DA 557). Jesus graciously accepted the hospitality of Pharisee and publican alike (see Luke 5:29; 19:5; cf. chs. 11:37; 14:1).

Sat down to meat. Literally, “reclined [at the table]” (see on Mark 2:15). Simon was on one side of Jesus and Lazarus on the other, as the guests reclined to partake of the meal (DA 558).

37. A woman. Mary of Bethany, otherwise known as Mary Magdalene (see Additional Note at end of chapter).

Alabaster. A comparatively soft rock that can be carved into cups, boxes, vases, or flasks. Ancient ointment flasks were usually carved from light-gray translucent limestone.

Ointment. The common “ointment” of Palestine was olive oil to which spice or other aromatic ingredients were added. Mary’s “ointment” was the “very costly” spikenard (see Mark 14:3; John 12:3), probably extracted from the fragrant roots of the *Nardostachys jatamansi*. This plant grows high in the Himalaya Mountains, and in ancient times was used as a source of perfume and medicine (see on S. of Sol. 1:12). If Mary’s “ointment” had come from the mountains of northern India, it is little wonder that it was considered “very costly” (John 12:3, 5). Mark 14:5 gives its value as about 300 Roman denarii (see p. 49). It should be remembered that this would be equivalent to 300 working days’ wages for a laborer of the time (see on Matt. 20:2). Such a valuable gift, suitable for the monarchs of earth, represented great personal sacrifice on the part of Mary (see DA 559, 564).

38. Stood at his feet. Guests at a feast would remove their sandals before the meal and recline on their left side on the couches on three sides of the table, with their left elbow resting on the table and their feet at the lower end of the couch, away from the table (see on Mark 2:15). This arrangement made it comparatively simple for Mary to “anoint” the feet of Jesus without being noticed until the aromatic scent of the perfumed ointment filled the room.

To wash. Literally, “to wet,” or “to moisten.”

With tears. Mary had probably not planned to shed tears of joy and thankfulness on Jesus’ feet. But as she knelt to apply the ointment, her tears probably came in spite of an attempt to hold them back, and fell on His feet before she could apply the ointment.

Hairs of her head. It was commonly thought a disgrace for a woman to let down her hair in public. But, probably unprepared for this apparently unforeseen need for a towel, she reached for her hair.

Kissed. According to the Greek, she kissed repeatedly (see v. 45). In some Oriental lands, today as well as in ancient times, and elsewhere, a kiss is a common form of greeting (see on Matt. 26:49). To embrace another’s feet and to kiss them was an entirely appropriate and respectable demonstration of high regard (see on Matt. 28:9).

Anointed them. See on Matt. 6:17. That is, after the burst of emotion.

39. Spoke within himself. Simon was reclining next to Jesus, and would be one of the first persons at the table to detect the perfume and to notice what was happening. A gracious host, he said nothing. But he passed silent judgment on Jesus for permitting the act of gratitude without remonstrating with the woman.

A prophet. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for reading “the prophet,” that is, the Prophet predicted by Moses in Deut. 18:15 (see on Deut. 18:15; John 1:21).

According to the Greek, Simon at this point had reached the conclusion that Jesus was *not* a prophet, or He would have known better what kind of woman Mary really was.

What manner. Or, “what sort.” Simon was apparently unaware that Jesus knew very well what “manner” of woman Mary was. Simon probably knew little of what had happened to Mary since the time he had humbled her (DA 566), a circumstance that tends to confirm the suggestion (see Additional Note at end of chapter) that Mary had left Bethany to save herself and her family embarrassment.

40. Jesus answering said. That is, answering Simon’s unspoken thought or question.

41. A certain creditor. [*The Two Debtors, Luke 7:41–43.* See on parables pp. 203–207.] That is, “a certain [professional] lender [of money at interest].” This brief parable is concerned with gratitude for the blessings of salvation. Apparently the parable is based on the fundamental principle that one’s appreciation for blessings received is in direct proportion to one’s sense of need in respect to those blessings. Only he who comes to the place where he feels his utter helplessness before God is in a frame of mind properly to appreciate what God does for him, whether in material things or in spiritual things. He who does not sense his need of divine help is confident of his own ability and resources, and relies on these to find a solution to the problems that confront him. It is for this reason that God so often permits His earthborn children to exhaust their own resources before He steps in to provide them with divine help. Should He intervene before they become conscious of their utter helplessness, they would not truly appreciate the blessings bestowed, they would not be led to trust in His wisdom and kindness, their characters would remain imperfect, and they would continue to trust in their own devices and ability to cope with the problems of life.

Thus it was with Simon. Though Jesus had healed him of the leprosy and he justifiably “desired to show his gratitude” (see Matt. 26:6; DA 557), it was the gratitude of one man toward another, not the gratitude of man toward the infinite God. Simon’s “character was not transformed; his principles were unchanged” (DA 557); in short, he was unconverted. Thus, Christ’s ultimate objective in healing his bodily leprosy, namely, healing him of the leprosy of sin, had not yet been achieved. Simon’s attitude toward Jesus was similar to that of Nicodemus, who recognized Jesus to be “a teacher come from God,” but failed to recognize his personal need of being “born again” (see on John 3:2, 3). Both were, at this stage in their religious experience, the “stony” ground type of hearers (see on Matt. 13:5).

Five hundred pence. That is, 500 Roman denarii, or about \$56.56 (see p. 49). Fifty denarii would be about \$5.66. In terms of actual purchasing power the value would be much greater (see on Matt. 20:2).

42. Nothing to pay. The size of the debt made no difference in the ability of the two debtors to pay. Both were unable to pay what they owed. But there was a vast difference in their appreciation for the lender’s cancellation of the debt. The man with the lesser obligation would, presumably, have found it easier to earn money to repay his debt, whereas the man with the greater obligation would have found it correspondingly more difficult. The man who owed the 500 Roman denarii (see on v. 41) was, apparently, so far in debt that he had little hope of repaying it, while the man who owed only 50 denarii might, if given time, do so. For both, at the moment their debts were due, however, there was, presumably, no alternative but that of slavery (see on Matt. 18:25).

Frankly. This word has been supplied by the translators, but its meaning is implied in the Gr. *charizomai*, “to do a favor,” or “to give graciously” (see on v. 21), here translated “forgave.”

Most. Literally, “more.”

43. I suppose. The answer was obvious, as was the case with so many of the parables and lessons of Jesus. In some instances those to whom they were addressed were reluctant, in other instances ready, to acknowledge the lesson so clearly set forth (Matt. 21:31, 41, 45; see Luke 10:36, 37).

He forgave most. See on v. 42. Simon pronounced judgment upon himself. Tactfully the Saviour led the proud Pharisee to realize that his sin, his seduction of Mary, was greater than hers, as 500 denarii was greater than 50 (DA 566, 567).

44. He turned to the woman. Though Christ turned to Mary as He spoke, His words were addressed to Simon. This fact may imply that Jesus meant His statement both as a rebuke to Simon and as an expression of gratitude to Mary for her thoughtful kindness. This tribute must have meant far more to Mary than a word later spoken to her alone, for Jesus honored her in the presence of others who considered they had valid reason to despise and ignore her.

Thou gavest me no water. According to the Greek in each case—the water (v. 44), the kiss (v. 45), and the oil (v. 46)—the word itself stands first for emphasis, as “*water* thou gavest me not,” etc. Why Simon did not provide at least water for his guests is not clear. It is doubtful that he would have invited a group of guests to share the hospitality of his home and table, and then have denied them lesser courtesies had these been mandatory upon the host. It seems, rather, that the contrast Christ here draws between Simon and Mary is not so much one of a duty omitted and a duty performed, as a favor neglected and a favor bestowed. Simon was hospitable, but he might have done even more than he did. Mary’s act of gratitude was performed, not as an obligation, but as the expression of a heart that overflowed with love and devotion.

45. Hath ... ceased. Gr. *dialeipō*, “to be intermittent.” It denotes repeated rather than continuous action.

46. Oil. Gr. *elaion*, usually “olive oil.” Simon had not “anointed” Jesus even with the most common oil of Palestine. In contrast, Mary used “ointment,” *muron*, the most expensive that money could buy (see on v. 37). Simon had not used even the most common oil on Christ’s head, whereas Mary had applied the most expensive kind to His feet. What a contrast—and in this contrast was reflected the heart attitude of each. The hospitality of Simon was insignificant by comparison with the boundless gratitude of Mary.

47. Forgiven. Love for Christ leads to forgiveness in the sense that love for Him prompts contrition and confession. The love Mary now felt in her heart for Christ was the *result* of forgiveness already granted her prior to this occasion (see Additional Note at end of chapter). Simon felt but little love for Christ, because his sins were as yet unforgiven, because, like Nicodemus (see on John 3:3–7), he had not considered himself a sinner in need of divine forgiveness.

48. Are forgiven. Literally, “have been forgiven.” Mary had already received forgiveness for her sins.

49. Within themselves. Or, “among themselves.”

Also. Gr. *kai*, “and,” “also,” or “even.” *Kai* seems best translated by “even” in this passage.

50. Faith hath saved. Man’s faith must ever rise to claim the blessings of forgiveness, for “without faith it is impossible to please him” (Heb. 11:6). A sense of need and of dependence upon Christ must accompany faith (see on Matt. 5:3; Luke 5:8).

²

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 7

Most commentators are of the opinion that the incident here recorded by Luke should not be identified with the feast mentioned by the other gospel writers. Some of their more important reasons for this conclusion are: (1) doubt that Mary of Bethany could have been of the character of the woman described by Luke, inasmuch as what is recorded elsewhere in the Gospels concerning Mary of Bethany seems to them to preclude identifying her with this woman; (2) doubt that a Pharisee, particularly one living only 2 mi. from Jerusalem, would, less than a week prior to the crucifixion, entertain Jesus publicly, particularly when there was evidently a question in his own mind as to the Messiahship of Jesus; (3) seemingly irreconcilable differences between the account in Luke and that of the other three Gospels which, in their opinion, tend to outweigh the many points of similarity.

These difficulties, it must be admitted, are not to be dismissed lightly. But neither is the conclusion based upon them as compelling as might at first appear. This may be seen from the following considerations:

1. John identifies Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus as the one who anointed Jesus’ feet, and his account of the incident is obviously parallel to that of Matthew and Mark, who, with Luke, do not mention her by name. This may have been because the woman, a devout Christian, was still living at the time the Synoptic Gospels were written. The three synoptic evangelists, although feeling that the narrative should be included in the gospel record, may have decided, in Christian kindness, not to mention her name. John, however, might not have felt bound by this consideration inasmuch as his Gospel was written several decades later (see p. 181), and thus probably many years after the woman’s death. It is worthy of note that John, who alone mentions Mary, is the only gospel writer to omit the name of Simon.

Luke (ch. 10:39, 42) and John (chs. 11:1, 2, 19, 20, 28, 31, 32, 45; 12:3) both mention and identify a Mary of Bethany. Mary, known as Mary Magdalene (probably “of Magdala,” a town on the western shore of the Lake of Galilee [see Matt. 15:39; DA 405]), is listed among the women who accompanied Jesus on the Second Galilean Tour (see Luke 8:1–3), and is mentioned by all four Gospels in connection with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 27:56, 61; 28:1; Mark 15:40, 47; 16:1, 9; Luke 24:10; John 19:25; 20:1, 11, 16, 18). At some time prior to the Second Galilean Tour Jesus had expelled seven demons from her (Luke 8:2; cf. Mark 16:9).

If, let us say, Mary of Bethany left home as a result of her shameful life, she could have found a home in Magdala, perhaps with friends or relatives who lived there. A majority of the recorded incidents of Jesus’ Galilean ministry took place in the vicinity of

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Lk 4:23). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

the Plain of Gennesaret, where Magdala was situated, and it may be that upon the occasion of one of Jesus' early visits to Magdala He freed her from demon possession. After accompanying Jesus on the Second Galilean Tour, she could have returned to Bethany, a changed person, and again made her home there. This possibility does not, of course, prove that Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala are to be identified as the same person, but it does show how this could reasonably have been the case. All the information on the subject that is given in the gospel record can easily be understood in harmony with such an explanation.

2. The argument that near the close of His ministry Jesus had no friends among the leaders of Israel is not valid. Nicodemus, "a ruler of the Jews" (John 3:1), boldly took the part of Jesus in a council of the chief priests and Pharisees (see John 7:45–53). His influence upon this occasion—at the Feast of Tabernacles, A.D. 30, about six months before the crucifixion—is apparent from the fact that his counsel prevailed and the group dispersed without accomplishing their objective (see John 7:53; DA 460). At the crucifixion, when of all times men would fear to be known as followers of Jesus, when "all the disciples forsook him, and fled" (Matt. 26:56), and when Peter, His most ardent defender, denied Him repeatedly (Matt. 26:69–75), Joseph of Arimathea, another "honourable counsellor" (see on Mark 15:43), publicly provided a burial place for Jesus, and, with Nicodemus, openly supervised His interment there (see Matt. 27:57–60; John 19:38–40). Many of the "chief rulers" believed on Jesus at this time (see DA 539, 699), but did not "confess" him for fear of excommunication (John 12:42), though after the resurrection many of them no doubt became Christians (see Acts 6:7).

3. The supposed points of difference between the various accounts are not so great as may appear, and by no means render the accounts mutually exclusive. Luke alone speaks of Jesus' host upon this occasion as a Pharisee; but this is not strange, for there were many Pharisees, and it was simply a matter of choice on the part of the writer whether he identified a man as a Pharisee. Luke alone of the gospel writer refers to two other occasion on which Christ dined in the home of a Pharisee (chs. 11:37; 14:1). Apparently Luke considered Christ's association with the Pharisees on a friendly, social basis a fact worthy of particular notice, and this would explain his recording here the fact that the host was a Pharisee.

That Luke dwells upon Simon's reaction to the incident, whereas the other gospel writers have nothing to say about this aspect of it, emphasizing only Judas' reaction, is not strange. If Luke had a reason for introducing the narrative at this point in his gospel record rather than at the close of Christ's ministry, as do the other writers, he would hardly have reported the attitude of Judas and the lesson Christ sought to teach him; to do so would seem to have been inappropriate at this early point in the gospel narrative. It would have presented Judas in a character role he had not openly developed as yet, and the report as given by the other three gospel writers at a later point in their narratives, would have tended only to confuse the reader of Luke at the point where Luke inserts the story. See pp. 191, 192.

There are many points in the narrative of Luke that are mentioned by one or more of the other three evangelists: (1) All agree that the occasion was a feast. (2) All agree that the person who anointed Jesus was a woman. (3) The three Synoptists agree that the "ointment" was in an alabaster container; John does not speak of the container. (4) Neither Luke nor Matthew mentions the kind of "ointment," but Mark and John both say

it was “spikenard.” (5) Both Luke and John mention the anointing of Jesus’ feet. (6) Both Luke and John mention the fact that Mary used her hair as a towel to wipe Jesus’ feet. (7) The three synoptic writers give the host’s name as Simon. These points of similarity do not necessarily prove that Luke’s incident has to be identified with that recorded by the other three evangelists, but they do tend to increase the degree of probability in that direction.

Assuming that the feast at the home of a Pharisee that Luke records, is identical with that in the home of Simon in Bethany, two questions call for an answer: (1) Why did Luke insert the story so early in his gospel narrative, so far from its true chronological setting? (2) Why is his account so different from that of the other three Gospels in certain important respects? The context in Luke provides an entirely satisfactory and convincing answer to these questions.

Luke is writing primarily for non-Palestinian Gentile Christians (see p. 664). Having mentioned repeatedly the opposition of the Jewish leaders to Christ (chs. 5:17, 21, 30, 33; 6:2, 7, 11; etc.), Luke no doubt feared that his educated Gentile readers would ask how they should be expected to believe in Christ if all the leading men of His own nation (and thus, presumably, the men best qualified to appraise His claims) rejected Him. This probably accounts for the fact that Luke, alone among the four gospel writers, mentions three specific instances when Jesus dined in the home of a Pharisee (chs. 7:36; 11:37; 14:1), as well as other instances of seeming friendliness between Jesus and certain Jewish leaders (see on ch. 7:3).

The immediate context of Luke’s account of the feast in Simon’s house makes even clearer the reason Luke inserted the story at this point in the narrative. He has just recorded the fact that the leaders rejected both the message of John the Baptist and that of Jesus (see vs. 30–35)—not all the leaders, to be sure, but evidently the vast majority. Therefore at this very point in his story of Christ Luke would be most likely to feel the need of pointing out that some of the leaders were friendly toward Him. Furthermore, it is in this very chapter that Luke records the friendly mediation of certain “elders of the Jews” (v. 3). Immediately following this incident, Luke gives the circumstances leading up to Christ’s own admission that the leaders of Israel rejected both John and Him (vs. 11–35). The friendliness of certain of the leaders mentioned immediately preceding and after vs. 11–35 may have been intended by Luke to allay any suspicion on the part of his readers that Christ might not be the Messiah because His own nation had rejected Him.

On the assumption that this is why Luke inserted the account of Simon’s feast at this early point in the gospel narrative rather than in its true chronological setting, the reason for the major difference between Luke’s account and that of the other three evangelists becomes clear. Accordingly, there was no point in Luke’s recording either the reaction of Judas or the references to Christ’s imminent death. The main point was the attitude of Simon as one of the leaders of Israel. For the other three evangelists, it is the attitude of Judas that has meaning in the context where their recital of the incident appears. The account of Judas’ reaction and that of Simon are not mutually exclusive, but complementary, and would in no way contradict each other even if they were both given by one or more of the writers of the Gospels.

Luke’s narrative of the feast at Simon’s house is clearly identified in *The Desire of Ages* with that of the feast in the home of Simon in Bethany, as given in the other Gospels (DA 557–563). Simon of Bethany is also identified with the Simon in Luke’s

narrative (DA 557, 558, 566). Furthermore, the unnamed woman of Luke's account is identified with Mary of Bethany (DA 558–560, 566) and with Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus had cast seven demons (DA 568). Also, Simon himself is declared to be the one who had led Mary into sin at some previous time (DA 566). Simon had already professed faith in Jesus as a prophet, recognized Him as a teacher sent from God, and hoped that He might be the Messiah (DA 557; cf. John 3:1, 2). But he had not as yet accepted Him as the Saviour, and this incident became the turning point for salvation in his life (DA 567, 568).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–17DA 315–320

4, 5 MH 65

4–7MH 63

4–9DA 316

5, 6 DA 317

11–15DA 318

14 DA 320

16, 17 DA 319

19–28DA 214–225

21–23DA 217

23 DA 218

30 DA 595

36–50DA 557–568

38 DA 559

39–43DA 566

43 SC 36; 2T 75

44, 45 DA 567

47 COL 211; DA 567; FE 275; MH 182

48 PP 754

CHAPTER 8

3 *Women minister unto Christ of their substance*, 4 *Christ, after he had preached from place to place, attended with his apostles, propoundeth the parable of the sower*, 16 *and of the candle*: 21 *declareth who are his mother, and brethren*: 22 *rebuketh the winds*: 26 *casteth the legion of devils out of the man into the heard of swine*: 37 *is rejected of the Gadarness*: 43 *healeth the woman of her bloody issue*, 49 *and raiseth from death Jairus' daughter*.

1. Afterward. [Second Galilean Tour, Luke 8:1–3=Matt. 9:35. Major comment:

Luke. See Middle Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord.] Gr. *kathexēs*, “one after another,” or “consecutively” (see on ch. 1:3). Here Luke evidently refers, not to the narrative of ch. 7:36–50 as preceding what he is now about to relate, but to his account of the Galilean ministry beginning with ch. 4:14. ch. Verses 1–3 of 8 are probably descriptive of the entire Second Galilean Tour, one incident of which has already been related (ch. 7:11–17), and deal with it in a general way. For a summary of events connected with the Second Galilean Tour see on Matt. 5:1; Luke 7:11. The Second Galilean Tour occupied most if not all of the early autumn of A.D. 29.

Went throughout. Gr. *diodeuō*, “to travel through.”

Every city and village. The sense of the Greek here is that Jesus went through Galilee “from city to city and from village to village.” There is no word for “every” in the Greek. There were more than 200 cities, towns, and villages in Galilee, and it would have been difficult if not impossible even briefly to visit them all during the few weeks devoted to this missionary itinerary.

Shewing the glad tidings. See on Mark 1:1; Luke 1:19.

The kingdom of God. See on Matt. 3:2; 4:17. During the early part of His Galilean ministry Jesus had proclaimed, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (see Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15). But between the first and second tours He had formally established His kingdom (see on Matt. 5:1; Mark 3:13). Now He went forth to proclaim the establishment of the kingdom and to demonstrate its benefits for man (see on Luke 7:11).

The twelve. On the First Galilean Tour Jesus probably did not have all the Twelve with Him (see on Mark 1:39); on the third tour He sent them out two by two and went out Himself with other disciples (see on Matt. 9:36).

2. Certain women. One of the characteristics of the Gospel of Luke is its frequent references to Christ’s ministry for the womenfolk of Palestine and the ministry of some of them on His behalf. This was something new, for the role of Jewish women in public life had been a relatively minor one, although in isolated instances, prophets like Elisha had ministered to women and been ministered to by them.

Luke is the only gospel writer to record many of the details of the early life of Jesus, and often does so from the viewpoint of the women most concerned—Mary, Elisabeth, and Anna. In other connections he mentions also the widow of Nain, the woman at Simon’s feast, the womenfolk named here, Martha, and a certain crippled woman, as well as Jairus’ daughter and the invalid woman healed upon the same occasion. In the Acts he mentions Sapphira, Priscilla, Drusilla, Berenice, Tabitha, Rhoda, Lydia, and a number of other women. It is as if Luke were saying that the gospel of the kingdom of heaven was as much for women as for men, and that their part in its proclamation was equally important with that of their menfolk. In Jewish movements of a strictly religious character, such as those of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and others, women seem to have had no role at all. They neither received direct benefit nor imparted it.

With the Second Galilean Tour the scope of Christ’s ministry expanded rapidly, and the group of men now accompanying Him had greatly increased compared with the group who had been on the first tour. This inevitably involved considerable expense and labor, by way of providing food, keeping the clothing clean and in repair, etc. Christ never performed miracles on His own behalf (see on Matt. 4:6); it would have been contrary to His principles to do so. So far as their material needs were concerned, He and His disciples were sustained on the principle that “the workman is worthy of his meat” (Matt. 10:10). Furthermore, the throngs who pressed upon Jesus and His disciples during these months of great promise often left them little or no time even to eat or sleep (see Mark 3:7–12, 20). At times the Saviour found it necessary to hide Himself from the throngs (see Mark 1:45; 4:36; 6:31) in order to find a few hours of rest. These various circumstances created an opportunity for the womenfolk who had come to believe in Christ to assist Him in His work.

Had been healed. That is, prior to the Second Galilean Tour.

Evil spirits. At least Mary Magdalene, and perhaps others, had been set free from demons.

Infirmities. Gr. *astheneiai*, “weaknesses,” “feeblenesses,” “sicknesses.”

Mary called Magdalene. See Additional Note on Chapter 7. The synoptic narratives always mention Mary Magdalene first when her name is listed together with the names of other women (see Matt. 27:56, 61; 28:1; Mark 15:40, 47; 16:1; Luke 24:10). This testifies to her ardent devotion to Jesus. Her gratitude was not merely emotional (see on Luke 7:38, 44), but intensely practical. This Mary is called Magdalene in order to distinguish her from the other Marys, of whom there were several. The name Mary occurs frequently in the NT. It is derived from the Hebrew name translated “Miriam” in the OT (see on Matt. 1:16). The designation Magdalene probably indicates that Mary was living in the town of Magdala (see on Matt. 15:39) at the time Christ found her and set her free from the power of demons.

3. Joanna. Nothing is known of this woman aside from what is mentioned here and in ch. 24:10, where her name again appears with that of Mary Magdalene. Being the wife of Herod’s steward, she must have been a person of wealth and influence.

Chuza. Nothing further is known of this man. A steward held a position of no mean importance in the household he served (see on Matt. 20:8).

Susanna. The name means “lily.” Nothing further is known of this woman. The Hebrews occasionally named their daughters after the names of flowers and trees.

Unto him. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “unto them,” thus including the disciples, particularly the Twelve (v. 1), as well as Jesus.

Their substance. That is, “the things belonging to them.” Jesus and His disciples had resort to a common purse (see on John 13:29; cf. ch. 12:6), and it would seem that these women disciples assisted in keeping the purse from running empty. It may well be said that this group of devout women constituted the first women’s missionary society of the Christian church.

4. People were gathered. [Sermon by the Sea (Parables), Luke 8:4–18=Matt. 13:1–53=Mark 4:1–34. Major comment: Matthew.]

11. The word of God. That is, the word that comes from God, or the word spoken by God.

16. Lighted a candle. See on Matt. 5:14–16. Only Mark and Luke record this parable as part of the Sermon by the Sea (Luke 8:4–18; see Mark 4:1–34). Possibly the reason Matthew did not include it is that he had already referred to Christ’s use of the same theme as part of the Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5:14–16), though the application was different there. Later, Luke repeats a parable by Christ, essentially the same (see ch. 11:33), with an application different from either of the two former presentations of the theme. Certain lessons here recorded by Luke were also repeated by Christ upon other occasions (see on ch. 8:17, 18).

17. Nothing is secret. Compare Matt. 10:26; Mark 4:22; Luke 12:22. The lesson Christ here draws from the parable of the lamp and the lampstand differs from that given in regard to the same theme in the Sermon on the Mount. Here, Christ comes as the bearer of the light of truth to dispel darkness from the minds of men concerning God and the kingdom of heaven (see on Matt. 13:11). There is no “mystery” or “secret” of importance to salvation that will be concealed from those who “take heed” how they “hear” (Luke 8:18).

18. Take heed. See on Matt. 11:15; 13:13.

Whosoever hath. See on Matt. 13:12; see also Matt. 25:29; Mark 4:25; Luke 6:38; 19:26. The truth here stated Christ spoke on numerous occasions, early and late during the course of His ministry.

19. Then came to him. [*Visit of Jesus' Mother and Brothers, Luke 8:19–21=Matt. 12:46–50=Mark 3:31–35. Major comment: Matthew.*]

22. A certain day. [*The Storm on the Lake, Luke 8:22–25=Matt. 8:18, 23–27=Mark 4:35–41. Major comment: Matthew.*]

23. There came down a storm. Compare “there arose a great storm” (Mark 4:37).

24. Master. Gr. *epistatēs* (see on ch. 5:5).

26. The Gadarenes. [*The Demoniacs of Gadara, Luke 8:26–39=Matt. 8:28 to 9:1=Mark 5:1–20. Major comment: Mark.*]

31. Deep. Gr. *abussos*, “an abyss” (see on Mark 5:10).

40. When Jesus was returned. [*The Invalid Woman; Jairus' Daughter, Luke 8:40–56=Matt. 9:18–26=Mark 5:21–43. Major comment: Mark.*]

42. One only. Gr. *monogenēs*, “only” (see on John 1:14; cf. on Luke 1:35). It is worthy of note that two of the three instances of Luke's use of *monogenēs* have to do with cases of raising from the dead—that of the son of the widow of Nain (see on Luke 7:12), and that of Jairus' daughter recorded here. The third instance of *monogenēs* in Luke is in connection with the healing of the lunatic son (see ch. 9:38). In the mind of an Oriental an only son or daughter is looked upon as the one to preserve the family name, and thus the bearer of a most important responsibility. The death of such a son or daughter was looked upon as particularly tragic. The Israelites considered it a tragedy for a family to become extinct (see on Deut. 25:6).

43. Spent all. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of this clause. Some have concluded that Luke's professional ethics as a physician here led him to avoid saying what Mark reported, namely, that the physicians made her worse rather than better (see ch. 5:26).

45. Sayest thou, Who touched me? Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words. They appear in the Latin Vulgate, and were probably carried over from it to the KJV.

54. He put them all out. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words here. However, their authenticity in Mark 5:40 is undisputed.

55. Spirit. Gr. *pneuma*, “wind,” “breath,” or “spirit,” from *pneō*, “to blow,” or “to breathe.” Any extension of the word to designate beings possessed of intelligence is a figure of speech known as *synechdoche*, by which a thing is referred to by naming one of its parts, usually that part which is most characteristic of it. There is nothing inherent in the word *pneuma* by which it may be taken to mean some supposed conscious entity of man capable of existing apart from the body, nor does the usage of the word with respect to man in the NT in any way imply such a concept. This concept is based exclusively on the preconceived opinions of those who, a priori, believe that a conscious entity survives the body at death, and who read this preconceived opinion into such words as “spirit” and “soul.” For the OT equivalent of *pneuma*, the Heb. *ruach*, see on Num. 5:14.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 Ev 52
 4–15COL 33–61
 5 COL 43
 11 COL 41; Ed 104, 253
 14 COL 51, 53; 3T 384; 4T 286, 391
 15 COL 58, 60
 18 ChS 91; 5T 694
 22–39DA 333–341
 24 DA 334
 28, 35 DA 338
 40–56DA 342–348
 45, 46 DA 344; MH 60
 48 DA 347; MH 61, 122
 50 DA 343

CHAPTER 9

1 *Christ sendeth his apostles to work miracles, and to preach.* 7 *Herod desired to see Christ.* 17 *Christ feedeth five thousand:* 18 *enquireth what opinion the world had of him: foretelleth his passion:* 23 *proposeth to all the pattern of his patience.* 28 *The transfiguration.* 37 *He healeth the lunatick:* 43 *again forewarneth his disciples of his passion:* 46 *commendeth humility:* 51 *biddeth them to shew mildness towards all, without desire of revenge.* 57 *Divers would follow him, but upon conditions.*

1. Called his twelve. [*Third Galilean Tour, Luke 9:1–6=Matt. 9:36 to 11:1=Mark 6:7–13.* Major comment: Matthew.] Concerning the appointment of the Twelve see on Mark 3:13–19.

7. Herod the tetrarch. [*Martyrdom of John the Baptist, Luke 9:7–9=Matt. 14:1, 2, 6–12=Mark 6:14–29.* Major comment: Mark.]

Perplexed. Gr. *diaporeō*, “to be completely at a loss” (cf. on Mark 6:20).

9. John have I beheaded. See Mark 6:17–29.

Desired to see. Literally, “was seeking to see.” It was more than a desire on the part of Herod; he was actually looking for an appropriate opportunity to have an interview with Jesus without, as he felt, compromising the dignity of his position as king. Herod seems to have had such interviews with John the Baptist (see DA 214, 222, 223), and apparently saw no reason why he should not have an interview with Jesus. But, like Nicodemus (see DA 168), Herod felt that it would be humiliating to one in his high position to go to Jesus openly. It might appear that he was taking Jesus’ claims seriously and was seeking counsel of Him. Herod well knew how Herodias would react to such an interview. Eventually Herod did have an opportunity to see Jesus face to face (see ch. 23:8), but when he did, wounded pride turned him against the Saviour.

10. When they were returned. [*Feeding the Five Thousand, Luke 9:10–17=Matt. 14:13–21=Mark 6:30–44=John 6:1–14.* Major comment: Mark.]

12. Wear away. Gr. *klinō*, “to bend,” “to bow [down],” or “to incline oneself” (see on Mark 2:15). Such English words as “decline,” “incline,” “recline,” and “clinic” are derived from *klinō*.

18. Alone praying. [*Withdrawal to Caesarea Philippi, Luke 9:18–27=Matt. 16:13–28=Mark 8:27 to 9:1.* Major comment: Matthew.] Between vs. 17 and 18 occurs what is

sometimes described as Luke's "great omission." Luke here omits all that is recorded in Matt. 14:22 to 16:12; Mark 6:45 to 8:26; and John 6:25 to 7:1; namely, Jesus walking on the lake, the Sermon on the Bread of Life, arguments with the Pharisees, the retirement to Phoenicia, the healing of the deaf-mute, the feeding of the 4,000, and the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida. As if to balance this "great omission" Luke has what is sometimes called the "great insertion," which consists of chs. 9:51 to 18:14, almost none of which appears in any of the other Gospels (see on ch. 9:51).

22. The Son of man. For the narrative relationship of vs. 22–27 see on Matt. 16:21. For comment see on Matt. 16:21–28.

28. Eight days after. [*The Transfiguration, Luke 9:28–36*=*Matt. 17:1–13*=*Mark 9:2–13*. Major comment: Matthew.] For counting the "eight days" see pp. 248–250.

29. The fashion. Literally, "the appearance of his face became different."

Glistering. That is, "glittering," or "sparkling."

31. Decease. Gr. *exodos*, "departure"; from *ex*, "out," and *hodos*, "way" (see Heb. 11:22; 2 Peter 1:15). This was a reference to the fate that awaited Jesus.

32. Awake. The disciples had been drowsy as a result of the weariness of the journey, the ascent into the mountain, and the lateness of the hour (see on Matt. 17:1).

33. Master. Gr. *epistatēs* (see on ch. 5:5).

35. My beloved Son. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading "my chosen Son."

37. On the next day. [*The Demon-possessed Boy, Luke 9:37–43^a*=*Matt. 17:14–21*=*Mark 9:14–29*. Major comment: Mark.] Only Luke specifically mentions that the healing of the boy took place on the day following the Transfiguration.

38. Only. Gr. *monogenēs* (see on Luke 7:12; 8:42; John 1:14).

39. Suddenly. Gr. *exaiphnēs*, "unexpectedly," or "suddenly."

Teareth. Gr. *sparassō*, "to convulse" (see on Mark 1:26).

43. Mighty power. Gr. *megaleiotēs*, "majesty," "greatness," or "magnificence."

While they wondered. [*A Secret Journey Through Galilee, Luke 9:43b–45*=*Matt. 17:22, 23*=*Mark 9:30–32*. Major comment: Mark.] The remainder of v. 43, beginning with these words, should be included in v. 44, as part of what follows. As it stands, the verse division obscures the transition of thought.

44. Sink down into your ears. A figure of speech meaning simply "remember."

45. It was hid. Not because Jesus willed that it should be, for upon repeated occasions He endeavored to make the matter clear. It was hid, rather, because of their own refusal to understand (see on Mark 9:32). They did not desire to understand, and as a result they could not (see on Matt. 13:13).

That they perceived it not. "That," Gr. *hina*, as used here, indicates result rather than purpose: "as a result of which" rather than "in order that." A good illustration of the use of *hina* to indicate result rather than purpose occurs in 1 Thess. 5:4 (cf. Rom. 11:11; Gal. 5:17; Luke 1:43; John 6:7).

46. There arose a reasoning. [*Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness, Luke 9:46–50*=*Matt. 18:1–35*=*Mark 9:33–50*. Major comment: Matthew and Mark.]

48. In my name. An expression characteristic of Luke's writings (Luke 21:8; Acts 4:17, 18; 5:28, 40; 15:14; etc.).

Great. According to the definition of greatness set forth by Jesus, it is possible for all to be "great" (see on Matt. 5:5).

51. When the time was come. [*Opening of the Peraean Ministry, Luke 9:51–56=Matt. 19:1, 2=Mark 10:1.* Major comment: Matthew and Luke. See Early Peraean Ministry; The Duration of Christ's Ministry, The Ministry of Our Lord.] See on Luke 2:49. Christ's ministry was rapidly drawing to a close. The cross was now only about six months away.

The section of Luke beginning with ch. 9:51 and continuing to ch. 18:14 is sometimes called the "great insertion," or the "great interpolation," owing to the fact that this part of the book—nearly one third of it—records material that does not appear elsewhere in the Gospels. The other writers are almost entirely silent concerning this phase of Jesus' ministry (see on ch. 9:18).

Received up. From the Gr. *analambanō*, "to take up." *Analambanō* is the word commonly used in reference to Christ's ascension (see Acts 1:2, 11, 22; 1 Tim. 3:16; etc.; cf. Luke 24:50, 51).

Set his face. From first to last every incident in the life mission of Jesus came about as the fulfillment of a plan that had existed before Jesus came to earth, and each event had its own appointed time (see on ch. 2:49). Again and again Jesus had said that His "time" or "hour" was not yet come (see John 2:4; 7:6, 8; etc.). He had made this statement again just before the recent Feast of Tabernacles (see on John 7:6), with reference to the time for Him to "go to Jerusalem" and to be "received up." On this, His last journey from Galilee, Jesus was consciously and purposefully going to the cross (see on Mark 10:32). A similar spirit moved Paul on his last trip to Jerusalem (see Acts 20:22–24; cf. 2 Tim. 4:6–8). Jesus knew what lay ahead of Him, yet made no effort to avert or postpone it. See on Matt. 19:1.

To go to Jerusalem. From the time that Jesus departed from Galilee for the last time, the gospel writers consider that He was on His way to Jerusalem, to meet the events that awaited Him there (see chs. 9:51, 53; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28). During this time Jesus was in and out of Judea, but spent little time in Jerusalem or Judea lest the crisis be precipitated before its time. Several months were involved on this last, circuitous (see DA 485), and slow (DA 495) journey to Jerusalem.

52. Sent messengers. Here, specifically, James and John (see ch. 54; DA 487). On this particular occasion it would seem that the messengers went ahead to arrange for overnight accommodations. However, this may also be a reference to the publicity Jesus rightfully sought in an endeavor to draw the attention of all Israel to Him in anticipation of His imminent crucifixion (see DA 485). This was Jesus' specific purpose later in His sending forth the Seventy (see on ch. 10:1).

A village of the Samaritans. The shortest route between Galilee and Judea was through the hills of Samaria. Two years before this Jesus had taken the same route northward from Judea to Galilee (see on John 4:3, 4). Often, particularly at festal seasons, when great throngs went to Jerusalem, Jews preferred the longer route through the Jordan valley in order to avoid contact with the Samaritans. However, Jesus Himself devoted a portion of the remainder of His ministry to the region of Samaria (see on John 11:54), and it was to the cities and towns of Samaria that the Seventy were first sent forth (see

DA 488). In view of the fact that they were to go, two by two, “into every city and place, whither he himself would come” (Luke 10:1), the Lord must have visited some considerable parts of Samaria Himself.

53. Not receive him. They refused Him a night’s lodging (DA 487). Bitter hatred existed between Jew and Samaritan (see John 4:9). For a history of the origin of the Samaritans, see on 2 Kings 17:23–41. For later experiences between the Jews and Samaritans and for the origin of the animosity between them, see Neh. 4:1–8; 6:1–14.

As though he would go to Jerusalem. Literally, “going to Jerusalem.” To pass through Samaria toward Judea, as the Jews of Galilee often did, with the objective of worshiping God in Jerusalem, implied the inferiority of the Samaritan religion, and was thus taken as an insult by the Samaritans.

54. James and John. See on Mark 3:17. These two brothers were the messengers sent ahead to make arrangements (see DA 487), and the harsh treatment they had received at the hands of the villagers rankled in their hearts. James and John apparently possessed a hot temper, a characteristic that earlier had led Christ to name them “sons of thunder” (see on Mark 3:17). Not long before this John had taken it upon himself to administer a stern rebuke to one whom he considered an enemy (see on Mark 9:38–41).

Command fire. Within sight of Mt. Carmel (see DA 487), the thoughts of the disciples naturally went back to the stern measures taken by the prophet Elijah in dealing with the unrepentant people of his day (see 1 Kings 18:17–46). Perhaps they recalled, also, the occasion when Elijah actually called fire down from heaven to destroy some confirmed foes of God (see on 2 Kings 1:10, 13).

Even as Elias did. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words. There can be little doubt, however, that this thought was in the minds of James and John as they spoke.

55. Rebuked them. The spirit manifested by James and John was utterly alien to the spirit of Christ, and could result only in hindering the work of the gospel. Jesus had recently warned the disciples against hindering the work of those who were friendly to Him (vs. 49, 50); now He counsels them that they are not to punish those who show themselves unfriendly. The spirit of revenge is not the spirit of Christ. Any attempt to coerce those who act contrary to our ideas is evidence of the spirit of Satan, not to Christ (DA 487). The spirit of bigotry and religious intolerance is offensive in the sight of God, especially when manifested by those who profess to love and serve Him.

Ye know not. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of the last sentence of v. 55 and the first sentence of v. 56. However, the truth here set forth is fully in harmony with other statements elsewhere in the Gospels (see Luke 19:10; etc.; also Matt. 5:17).

56. Another village. Probably another Samaritan village, one that was more friendly. Christ here provided an example of the admonition He had formerly given the disciples (see Matt. 10:22–24). Some have suggested that this may have been either the village of Sychar, or another in its near vicinity whose inhabitants had heard Christ upon a former occasion and were friendly toward Him (see John 4:39–42).

57. It came to pass. [*Tests of Discipleship*, Luke 9:57–62. Cf. on Matt. 8:19–22; 16:24, 25; Luke 14:25–33.] Verses 57–62 are commonly explained as dealing with the same incident as that recorded in Matt. 8:19–22, on the basis that Matthew and Luke have simply inserted the narrative at different places in their respective records. However, this explanation is not convincing. As to reasons for considering the accounts of Matt. 8:19–

22 and Luke 9:57–62 to be reports of separate and distinct incidents see on Matt. 8:19. Each account is appropriate to its own setting and context.

They went in the way. In Matt. 8:19–22 Jesus and His disciples were on the point of entering their boat to cross the lake; here they were “in the way,” that is, making a journey by land. They were, in fact, on their way to Jerusalem (see on Matt. 19:1; cf. Luke 9:51).

59. He said unto another. In the similar passage in Matthew, the man to whom Jesus addressed the following counsel volunteered to follow Jesus. Here, Jesus bade the man to follow Him.

60. Go thou and preach. The emphasis seems to have been, “If you are not spiritually dead, it is your business to go and preach the kingdom of God. Leave the burial of those who are physically dead to those who are spiritually dead.”

61. Let me first go. This excuse implies hesitancy and indecision, perhaps even unwillingness to make the sacrifice required of disciples.

Bid them farewell. This involved more than a brief return home. According to Oriental custom it might take months or even years to arrange matters at home. There were only about six months of Jesus’ ministry left, and if this prospective disciple ever planned to follow Jesus, he had best do so without delay. In a short time it would be too late. He now proposed leaving Jesus in order to take leave of all his old friends, and they might prevail upon him not to return to Jesus. The claims of God take precedence over those of men, even of close relatives (see Matt. 12:48, 49; 19:29). Perhaps the man wanted to take one more fling at life before forsaking it all to follow Jesus. The circumstances were far different here from what they were when Elisha was called to follow Elijah. Elisha’s response was immediate; his delay to take leave of his parents was only momentary (see on 1 Kings 19:20).

Which are at home at my house. His relatives might attempt to dissuade him, even as Jesus’ mother and brothers had sought to turn Him aside from the path of duty (see on Matt. 12:46).

62. Looking back. He who “looks back” is not concentrating on the task at hand. He is, at best, a halfhearted worker (see on Matt. 6:24; Luke 14:26–28). Jesus had “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51), and anyone who gave thought to following Him must of necessity be steadfast in his decision (cf. John 11:16). As it was, when the time of test came to the Twelve, they all “forsook him and fled” (Matt. 26:56), yet all except Judas returned in due course of time. Absolute and undivided devotion is essential to true discipleship. He who would plow a straight furrow in any service for God must give the task his wholehearted, uninterrupted attention.

The proverb of v. 62 had already been known for centuries in various lands of the ancient Near East. Hesiod, a Greek poet of the 8th century B.C., wrote, “He who would plow straight furrows must not look about him” (*Works and Days* ii. 60).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–6DA 349–358

2 CT 465; ML 226

6 CT 465

7–10DA 359–363

10–17DA 364–371

13 PK 243

18–27DA 410–418
 23 MH 198; TM 127, 178; 6T 248, 249, 449; 9T 166, 186
 26 AA 33; PK 720
 28–36 DA 419–425
 32 DA 420
 35 EW 164; PK 227
 37–45DA 426–431
 41 DA 428
 43 DA 429
 46–48DA 432–442
 49 5T 461
 51, 52 DA 486
 51–53AA 540
 52–54SL 58
 53–56DA 487; 2T 566
 54 SR 268
 54–56 AA 541; GC 570
 55, 56 SL 59
 56 COL 212; DA 582; MH 19
 58 MH 197
 59–623T 500
 60 2T 541
 62 PK 222, 225; 6T 148

CHAPTER 10

1 *Christ sendeth out at once seventy disciples to work miracles, and to preach: 17 admonisheth them to be humble, and wherein to rejoice: 21 thanketh his Father for his grace: 23 magnifieth the happy estate of his church: 25 teacheth the lawyer how to attain eternal life, and to take every one for his neighbour that needeth his mercy: 41 reprehendeth Martha, and commendeth Mary her sister.*

1. Other seventy. [Mission of the Seventy, Luke 10:1–24. Cf. on Matt. 9:36 to 11:1. See Early Peraean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord.] Better, “seventy others”; that is, the Seventy were in addition to the Twelve, not in addition to another “seventy” previously appointed. The word “also” seems to refer to the mission of the Twelve a year before this. For the time and circumstances of the mission of the Seventy see on Matt. 19:1. Important textual evidence (cf. p. 146) may also be cited for the reading “seventy-two.” The fact that the Seventy are not mentioned again implies that this was a temporary appointment. It seems that the appointment took place in Peraea, but that the Seventy were sent first to the region of Samaria (see DA 488). They had accompanied Jesus on the Third Galilean Tour, when the Twelve had gone forth on their first mission, two by two (see DA 488).

A comparison here is interesting. There were 12 patriarchs; there were also 12 disciples (cf. Rev. 7:4–8; 21:12, 14). Moses appointed 70 men to assist him in judging Israel (see Num. 11:16–25); Jesus also appointed 70 men to assist Him. According to Jewish tradition, based on the list of the descendants of Noah in Gen. 10, there were 70 nations in the world. The Sanhedrin was made up of 70 members, plus its president. The number 70 thus played an important role in Jewish thought. To what extent this may have

influenced Jesus in the appointment of the Seventy, or whether any significance attaches to the fact that they were 70 in number, is something Inspiration has not revealed and on which speculation is idle.

Two and two. As with the Twelve (see on Mark 6:7). This custom seems to have become common in the missionary work of the early Christian church (see Acts 13:2; 15:27, 39, 40; 17:14; 19:22). Compare also the mission of two of John's disciples (Luke 7:19).

Whither he himself would come. This missionary expedition bears the marks of a carefully organized evangelistic campaign. The fact that the Seventy were sent to certain selected localities means that Jesus had budgeted His time and had determined in advance exactly where He would go during the months that remained (see on ch. 2:49). The fact that the Seventy went first to the towns and villages of Samaria implies that Jesus must have conducted a rather extensive ministry there during the winter of A.D. 30–31. The friendly attitude of Jesus toward the people of Samaria manifested upon the occasion of His visit with the woman of Sychar and His ministry for the people of that vicinity (see John 4:5–42) must have done much to break down prejudice. That visit had occurred about two years prior to this time, probably during the winter of A.D. 28–29. Upon that occasion “many” had already come to believe on Him (John 4:39, 41). The ministry of the Seventy for the Samaritan people would prepare the disciples for their later labors in that region (see Acts 1:8). After the resurrection, marked success attended the labors of the apostles there (see DA 488).

2. Harvest. In large part the instructions Jesus gave to the Seventy were similar to those previously given to the Twelve. Whether the briefer account in Luke is an abbreviated report of what Jesus said upon this occasion, or whether His instructions to them were actually more brief than those given the Twelve, we do not know. For comment on these instructions see on Matt. 9:37, 38; 10:7–16.

3. Go your ways. See on Matt. 10:5, 6. Jesus had earlier said, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold” (John 10:16). Now He sent forth the Seventy to find some of these lost sheep.

As lambs. The account of Matt. 10:16 reads “as sheep” (cf. John 21:15–17).

4. Neither purse. Compare the instruction to the Twelve (see on Matt. 10:9, 10).

Scrip. Gr. *pēra*, “a leather sack,” often used by travelers to hold clothing or provisions, possibly also a sack used by beggars.

Shoes. Literally, “sandals.” In v. 7 Jesus explains why He forbids them to take items that travelers usually considered necessities.

Salute no man by the way. The Seventy were to reserve their salutations for the homes they should visit (see Luke 10:5; see on 2 Kings 4:29). Even today Oriental salutations are often involved and time consuming. There was but a comparatively short time left in the life of the Saviour, and the mission of the Seventy must be accomplished with dispatch. They were sent forth to proclaim “the kingdom of God” (Luke 10:9), and the King's business required haste. For comment on the work of the Seventy as heralds of the King compare on Matt. 3:3; Luke 3:5.

5. Peace. A common form of Oriental greeting (see on Jer. 6:14; Matt. 10:13).

6. Son of peace. A typical Hebraism, to describe the head of a household if he is a congenial man ready to receive them and entertain them.

7. In the same house. For comment see on Matt. 10:11.

The labourer. See on Matt. 10:10; cf. Deut. 25:4. This saying of Jesus is one of the few to which Paul makes direct reference (see 1 Tim. 5:18).

From house to house. See on Matt. 10:11.

8. Such things. The disciples were not to be greedy, asking for food their host did not provide; or fastidious, declining to eat what he did provide. Jesus' admonition here given to the Seventy is sometimes construed as permission for Christians today to eat whatever may be provided by a host, even though it be food specifically forbidden in the Scriptures. It should be remembered, however, that the Seventy did not enter Gentile homes, where forbidden food would be served, but only the homes of Jews and Samaritans, both of which held rigorously to the provisions of the Pentateuch with respect to clean and unclean foods (see on Lev. 11).

9. Kingdom of God. See on Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:2; 4:19. Compare the message of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2) and that of Jesus Himself (Mark 1:15). This was also the message of the Twelve (see Matt. 10:7).

13. Chorazin. See on Matt. 11:21–24. As a prelude to the comments He made in Luke 10:16, Jesus mentions certain cities that had rejected His message.

Sackcloth. Gr. *sakkos*, “a sack,” or “a coarse cloth [made of hair]”; probably from the Heb. *śaq* (see on Gen. 42:25; Esther 4:1).

15. Exalted to heaven. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) reading this opening clause as a question: “Will you be exalted to heaven?” (see RSV). Compare the spirit that motivated Satan (Isa. 14:13–15).

Hell. Gr. *hadēs*, “grave,” or “death”; that is, the realm of the dead (see on Matt. 11:23; 16:18; cf. Isa. 14:15). Men are not to meet with condemnation in the great final day of judgment because they have believed error, but because they have neglected Heaven-provided opportunities for knowing what is truth (see DA 490).

16. Heareth you. See on Matt. 10:40.

17. The seventy returned. Compare the return of the Twelve (see on Mark 6:30).

With joy. Their mission had been eminently successful.

Devils are subject. At least so far as the record goes Jesus had not specifically commissioned the Seventy to cast out devils (see v. 9) as He had the Twelve (Matt. 10:1). Nevertheless, this aspect of their ministry seems to have impressed the Seventy most.

Through thy name. See on Matt. 10:18, 40. Filled as they were with holy joy, the Seventy yet recognized that it was the power of Jesus working through them that had made success possible.

18. Beheld. Gr. *theōreō*, “to gaze at,” “to contemplate,” “to behold,” frequently implying calm, intent, continued contemplation of an object (cf. John 2:23; 4:19).

Satan. Gr. *Satanas*, from the Heb. *śaṭan*, “an adversary.”

As lightning. Like a dazzling light flashing, then suddenly extinguished.

Fall from heaven. Compare Isa. 14:12–15; John 12:31, 32; Rev. 12:7–9, 12. Satan was a conquered foe. In this statement Jesus looked forward to the crucifixion, when the power of Satan would be broken (see DA 679, 758; cf. 687). He saw also the time when sin and sinners would be no more. The Seventy had witnessed the expulsion of Satan from the lives of individual men; Jesus “beheld” his complete downfall.

19. Power to tread. For a repetition of this promise see Mark 16:18, and for a fulfillment of it, Acts 28:3–5.

Power of the enemy. The word here translated “power” is *dunamis*, as compared with *exousia*, “authority,” given the Seventy (see on ch. 1:35). The first “power” in v. 19 is from *exousia*, and the second, from *dunamis*. Satan had *dunamis* over which the disciples were given *exousia* (see on Matt. 10:1).

Nothing shall by any means. In the Greek there is a triple negative, which gives the statement great force.

20. In this rejoice not. The ability to perform miracles does not of itself assure one eternal life (see Matt. 7:22, 23).

Written in heaven. In the book of life (see Phil. 4:3; Rev. 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19), in which are inscribed the candidates for the kingdom of heaven.

21. That hour. That is, the hour of the return of the Seventy.

Spirit. There is some textual evidence (cf. p. 146) for reading “the Holy Spirit.”

22. Will reveal him. That is, “wills,” or “chooses,” to reveal Him (see on Matt. 11:27).

23. Blessed. Gr. *makarios*, “happy,” or “blessed” (see on Matt. 5:3).

25. A certain lawyer. [*The Good Samaritan*, Luke 10:25–37. On parables see pp. 203–207.] Jesus was on His last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (see on Matt. 19:1). The narrative implies that the event took place in Jericho. The incident involving the Samaritan and the victim of robbery had but recently occurred (see DA 499).

Immediately following the encounter with the lawyer and the narration of the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus was at Bethany, having just made the journey up from Jericho (see DA 525). It is possible that He was on His way to attend the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem (see on Matt. 19:1; cf. John 10:22–38), after which He returned to Peraea (see John 10:39, 40). Immediately following Christ’s retirement to Peraea (vs. 39, 40), John gives an account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead (ch. 11:1–46).

Tempted him. The question the lawyer asked Jesus had been carefully framed by the religious leaders (see DA 497).

Master. Literally, “Teacher.” A professional teacher of the law himself, the lawyer confronts Jesus with a problem concerning which the scribes themselves spent much time in discussion.

What shall I do? The lawyer’s question reveals the fact that his concept of righteousness was entirely wrong. To him, as to most Jews of the day, gaining salvation was essentially a matter of doing those things that were prescribed by the scribes. Thus he considered that one could earn salvation by works. In the Greek, emphasis is placed on the word “do.”

Eternal. Gr. *aiōnios* (see on Matt. 13:39).

26. How readest thou? It was the lawyer’s business to know the answer to his own question. He was a professor of Jewish law, and as such it was entirely appropriate that he should be given the opportunity to answer. Jesus’ question does not necessarily imply a rebuke. It was a courtesy to give him an opportunity to answer his own question.

27. Thou shalt love. The lawyer quotes from Deut. 6:5 (cf. ch. 11:13). Compare Matt. 22:36–38, where Jesus later gave the same answer to the same question put to him by

another lawyer. The words of Deut. 6:5 were recited by every devout Jew morning and evening as a part of the *shema* (see p. 57), and were worn also in the phylacteries (see on Ex. 13:9). Jews who had an insight into the inner meaning of “the law” (see on Deut. 31:9; Prov. 3:1) should have realized that its principles were not arbitrary but based on fundamental principles of right which might properly be summed up in the command “to love.”

To love God in the sense here stated and implied is to dedicate to His service one’s entire being, the affections, the life, the physical powers, and the intellect. This kind of “love” is “the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13:10), the kind of “love” in which a person will abide when he sets out, by the grace of Christ, to “keep” the “commandments” of Christ (John 14:15; 15:9, 10). In fact, God sent His Son into the world with the specific purpose of making it possible for us to keep “the law” in this sense and in this spirit. It is thus that “the righteousness of the law” is to be “fulfilled in us” (Rom. 8:3, 4). He who truly “knows” God will keep “his commandments” because the “love” of God is “perfected” in him (1 John 2:4–6; see on Matt. 5:48).

Heart. Used here in the sense of “inclination,” “desire,” “mind.”

Soul. See on Matt. 10:28.

Neighbour. Gr. *plēsiōn* (see on v. 36). Here the lawyer quotes from Lev. 19:18, where “neighbour” apparently means “a fellow Israelite.” Jesus obviously extends the definition to include Samaritans, and thus non-Jews (see on Luke 10:36).

28. Answered right. Later, when Jesus gave the same answer to another lawyer’s question, the questioner commended Him with the words, “Master, thou hast said the truth” (Mark 12:32). Christ’s answer had bypassed the mass of oral and written comment on the law, and even all the specific precepts of the law themselves. Every precept of “the law,” in the broader sense of “law” (see on Prov. 3:1) as well as in the narrower sense of the Ten Commandments, is an expression, extension, and application of the principle of “love” (see on Luke 10:27). The form of the lawyer’s answer was entirely correct; what he lacked was spiritual insight into the application of this principle to his life (see on Matt. 5:17–22). He knew the letter of the law, but not its spirit. This knowledge comes only when the principles of the law are applied to the life (see on John 7:17).

This do. According to the Greek, “keep on doing this”; that is, begin applying these principles to your life and keep on applying them. Apparently the trouble was that this man, like the rich young ruler, thought he had kept all these things from his youth up (see Matt. 19:20), but at the same time realized that something was still lacking in his spiritual life. Legal righteousness never satisfies the soul, for there is something vital lacking until the love of God takes control of the life (see 2 Cor. 5:14). Only as a man fully surrenders himself to the influence of that love (see on Luke 10:27) can he truly keep the spirit of the law (see Rom. 8:3, 4).

Live. That is, in the full sense of the word, both here and in the hereafter (see on John 10:10). However, the context shows that Jesus here refers primarily to eternal life (see Matt. 19:16, 17; Luke 10:25).

29. Willing. That is, the lawyer “wished to,” or “determined to,” justify himself before the bystanders.

Justify himself. Like the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16–22), this lawyer was not satisfied with the Pharisaic concept of righteousness (see DA 497). Like the rich young ruler, doubtless aware of a lack in his life that, unconsciously, he felt Jesus could supply.

But like Nicodemus (see on John 3:2, 3), he was reluctant to admit the fact even to himself. Therefore, partly as a means of evading his inner conviction, he proceeded to “justify himself” by making it appear that there were major difficulties in actually loving one’s fellow men (see DA 498).

Who is my neighbour? See on Matt. 5:43. In the Greek the stress is on the pronoun. The purpose of this question was to parry conviction and to vindicate self (DA 498). When a man brings up quibbling questions to which he obviously knows, or could know, the answers, it is usually evident that he is under conviction (cf. John 4:18–20) and is casting about for some reason or excuse for not doing what conscience tells him he should do. In the thinking of the lawyer, heathen and Samaritans were excluded from the category of “neighbour”; the only question lay in the problem as to which of the fellow Israelites he was to consider as “neighbours.”

30. A certain man. This was an actual incident (DA 499), one, probably, that was current news in Jericho, the home of the priest and the Levite involved in the incident (see on vs. 25, 31). Both of these men were present upon this occasion (DA 499).

Down from Jerusalem. “Down” is the correct word to describe the descent from Jerusalem, about 2,600 ft. (792 m.) above sea level, to Jericho, about 700 ft. (213 m.) below sea level. The main road from Jerusalem to Jericho follows the *Wādī Qelt* down through a portion of the dry, barren, uninhabited hills of the Wilderness of Judah. At one point the *Wādī Qelt* narrows into a rocky defile that from time immemorial has been the haunt of robbers. The entire region, with its many caves and rocks, provides a perfect hideout for outlaws.

Stripped him. This band of robbers seems to have been extremely vicious.

Wounded. Perhaps because he attempted to resist.

31. By chance. Or, “by coincidence.”

There came down. That is, from Jerusalem to Jericho (see on v. 30).

A certain priest. Both the priest and the Levite were returning from their appointed term of service at the Temple (COL 382; cf. on ch. 1:5, 9, 23).

Passed by. Evidently, as if he had not seen; actually, because he did not care. Hypocrisy became a cloak, as it were, to protect selfishness from inconvenience. The unfortunate wayfarer, naked and wounded (see vs. 30, 34), was no doubt covered with blood and dirt. If this hapless individual had been dead, it would have meant ritual defilement for either priest or Levite to touch him (see Num. 19:11–22). Furthermore, he might be a Samaritan or even a Gentile. And, under any circumstances, it was unlawful for the priest to touch the dead body of anyone but an immediate relative (see Lev. 21:1–4). No doubt many such excuses went through these men’s minds as they sought to justify their conduct.

32. Came and looked. The Levite seems to have been a trifle more conscientious than the priest, or perhaps only more curious. At least he came down to the place where the man lay before he went on his way (see DA 499).

33. A certain Samaritan. The fact that the Samaritan was traveling in what was to him a foreign district made his deed of mercy even more noteworthy. In this district it would be likely that the unfortunate wayfarer was a Jew, a member of the race that cherished the most bitter enmity against the Samaritans. The Samaritan knew well that if he had been the wounded victim lying beside the road he could have expected no mercy

from any ordinary Jew. However, the Samaritan, at considerable risk to himself from the attacks of robbers, determined to help the poor victim.

In a very real way the mercy exhibited by the Samaritan reflects the spirit that moved the Son of God to come to this earth to rescue humanity. God was not obliged to rescue fallen man. He might have passed sinners by, as the priest and the Levite passed the luckless traveler on the road to Jericho. But the Lord was willing to be “treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves” (DA 25).

34. Wounds. Gr. *traumata*, from which come our English words, “trauma,” “traumatism,” etc.

Oil and wine. Common household remedies of ancient Palestine. Sometimes the two were mixed and used as a salve.

An inn. Gr. *pandocheion*, “a caravansary,” from *pas*, “all,” and *dechomai*, “to receive.” A *pandocheion* was rather large in contrast with the less pretentious *kataluma* (see on ch. 2:7). The inn to which the Samaritan bore the unfortunate wayfarer was probably in or near Jericho, whither he was traveling, and the first inhabited town to which he would come.

35. Two pence. That is, two Roman denarii, now worth perhaps 22 cents, but then equivalent to two days’ wages (see p. 49).

Host. Gr. *pandocheus*, “an innkeeper”; that is, one who operates a *pandocheion* (see on v. 34).

When I come again. Probably on the return journey. The confidence the innkeeper seems to have had in the Samaritan may imply that the latter was a businessman who frequently passed through Jericho and was known to the innkeeper.

I will repay. The Greek stresses “I.” The “two pence” were merely a down payment. It would no doubt be several days before the injured traveler would recuperate sufficiently to continue on his way (see v. 30). In view of this, the kind Samaritan assumes full responsibility for the stranger. He might have reasoned that the incident occurred in Judea, that the man was probably a Jew, and that the innkeeper was a Jew, and that therefore he, as a Samaritan, had discharged his responsibility. But not so. The Samaritan’s interest was more than momentary; he did even more than he could have been expected to do. His interest in the stranger continued even beyond the minimum obligation any passer-by might reasonably be expected to assume.

36. Neighbour. Gr. *plesion*, literally, “a near [one].” The priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan had all been “near” to the hapless wayfarer in his time of need, yet only one of them acted like a “neighbour.” Neighborliness is not so much a matter of proximity as it is of willingness to bear another’s burdens. Neighborliness is the practical expression of the principle of love for one’s fellow man (see on v. 27).

37. Shewed. Gr. *poieō*, literally, “to do” (cf. v. 25). Under the circumstances mere thoughts of mercy would have been of no value; it was deeds that counted. The lawyer saw the point of the story. It was an apt and effective answer to his question (see v. 29). In this true-life narrative Jesus dismissed all the legalistic quibbling about who a man’s neighbor might be (see on v. 29). A man’s neighbor is simply anyone who needs his help.

True neighborliness had saved the life of one of the lawyer’s fellow men, possibly one of his personal friends. He could find nothing to criticize in Jesus’ reply to his

question. Apparently he recognized in his inmost soul that Jesus' definition of "neighbour" was the only true one. As a lawyer, he no doubt was able to appreciate more fully than others in the audience Jesus' profound understanding of the true significance of the law (see on vs. 26–28); as a teacher, he must have appreciated the tactful way in which Jesus handled his question. At any rate his prejudice toward Jesus was removed (see COL 380).

Go, and do thou. In the Greek the stress is on the pronoun. The word "do" is from the Gr. *poieō*, the same word translated "shewed" in the lawyer's reply to Jesus, above. The lawyer had said, "He that did mercy." Jesus replied, "Go, and do thou likewise." In other words, if you wish to know true neighborliness, go and pattern your conduct after that of the Samaritan. Such is the nature of true religion (see Micah 6:8; James 1:27). Our fellow men need to feel the clasp of "a hand that is warm" and fellowship with "a heart full of tenderness" (COL 388). God "permits us to come in contact with suffering and calamity in order to call us out of our selfishness" (COL 388). It is for our own eternal good to practice true neighborliness whenever we have the opportunity to do so (cf. Heb. 13:2).

38. A certain village. [*In the Home of Mary and Martha*, Luke 10:38–42 See Closing Peraean Ministry.] Though Luke does not name it here, the "village" was clearly Bethany (see John 11:1), and this was Jesus' first visit to it (see DA 525). He had just come up the *Wādī Qelt* from Jericho (DA 525; see on Luke 10:30), apparently not long after the incident related in vs. 25–37 (see on v. 25). Hereafter Jesus frequently visited the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (see DA 524), at least two other visits being recorded in the gospel narratives (John 11:17; 12:1–3). He probably visited there several times more (see Matt. 21:17; Mark 11:1, 11; Luke 19:29).

Martha. For a brief character sketch of Martha, see on v. 41. Martha was apparently the older of the two sisters and the one who administered the affairs of the home—she was the one who "received him into her house."

39. Mary. See Additional Note on Chapter 7. Whereas Martha, being in charge of the home, was by nature of a practical turn of mind, Mary was less concerned with material things than with spiritual things. Martha apparently "took thought" for the daily needs of the home (see on Matt. 6:25–34), whereas Mary sought "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). Though not mentioned on this occasion, Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, was one of Jesus' steadfast friends and loyal disciples (see DA 524). See Additional Note on Luke 7.

At Jesus' feet. To "sit" at someone's "feet" refers not so much to the matter of assuming a certain posture, as to being a learner from someone, though both ideas may well have been true (see Acts 22:3; cf. Deut. 33:3).

40. Cumbered. Martha was "distracted," or "overoccupied," with the pressure of many details necessary to the entertainment of guests.

Lord, dost thou not care? Martha probably realized from past experience that nothing would be gained by an appeal to Mary directly. If Jesus, as was obvious, had so much influence with Mary, perhaps His influence would avail where her own would fail. Compare the instance of the man who appealed to Jesus to persuade his brother to divide the family inheritance (ch. 12:13, 14). In appealing to Jesus, Martha not only blamed Mary but indirectly censured Jesus as well. The real trouble, she implied, lay in the fact that He did "not care" about the situation or intend to do anything about it, that He was more pleased to have Mary listen to Him than to have her assist in preparing the meal.

41. Martha, Martha. Repetition of a name implies affection and sometimes concern. Compare Luke 22:31; Acts. 9:4.

Art careful. Gr. *merimnaō*, “to be anxious,” “to be troubled [with cares],” or “to care for.” *Merimnaō* refers to the inward, mental distraction that was the real cause of Martha’s impatience with Mary. It was against this very type of thing that Jesus had expressed a strong warning in His Sermon on the Mount (where *merimnaō* is rendered, “take ... thought”; see Matt. 6:25, 28, 31, 34). Those who become followers of Jesus should avoid the spirit of anxious care that moved Martha in her petulant appeal to Jesus.

Troubled. This refers to Martha’s outward demeanor, in contrast with her inner feelings. She was “anxious” inwardly, and as a result “troubled” outwardly. If we would only seek to cultivate that inward composure that Martha so much needed we would avoid much unnecessary anxiety.

Many things. Simple hospitality would have been sufficient for Jesus; He did not require elaborate preparations.

42. One thing is needful. Compare ch. 18:22, “Yet lackest thou one thing.” Martha was diligent, prompt, and energetic, but lacked the calm, devotional spirit of her sister Mary (see DA 525). She had not learned the lesson set forth in Matt. 6:33, of making the kingdom of God first in her interests and endeavors, and of according material things a subordinate role (see on vs. 24–34).

That good part. As a result of her own experiences Mary had learned the lesson her sister Martha yet needed to learn (see Additional Note on Chapter 7). Some consider the expression “good part” to be an adroit play on words, by which Jesus makes a reference to the best dish on the table. “The good part,” the “one thing” needful for Martha, was a deeper concern for a knowledge of the kingdom of heaven.

Not be taken away. The material things in which Martha interested herself could be taken away (see chs. 12:13–21; 16:25, 26). Mary was storing up “treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Luke 12:33; see on Matt. 6:19–21).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 DA 488; Ev 58, 72
- 1–24 DA 485–496
- 2 GW 27; MH 58; MYP 23; 1T 368, 473; 2T 116
- 3 DA 353
- 5 DA 351
- 7 Ev 493; 5T 374; 8T 142
- 8, 9 MH 139; MM 253
- 9 CT 465; Ev 52; MM 249; 4T 225
- 10–15 DA 489
- 10–16 4T 197
- 16 1T 360; 3T 450
- 17 MH 139
- 17–19 DA 490; MH 94
- 19 MB 119
- 20 DA 493; GC 481
- 21, 22 DA 494

25 DA 504
 25, 26 GC 598
 25–28COL 377; DA 497; FE 419; 5T 359
 25–30WM 43
 25–37COL 376–389; DA 497–505; 3T 523; 4T 57
 26 COL 39; MH 21
 27 COL 49; CS 212, 296; CT 403; Ed 16, 228; FE 436; PK 82; PP 305; TM 439; 2T 45, 153, 168, 170; 3T 246, 546; 4T 50, 224, 226, 228, 353, 521; 5T 428; 6T 103, 303, 447, 477; 8T 64, 139, 164; 9T 212
 27, 28 Ev 242
 28 DA 498, 504; 3T 534
 29 COL 376, 389; DA 503; ML 232; 6T 294
 29–35COL 379
 29–373T 512; 4T 226; WM 42–49
 30–32DA 499
 30–378T 59
 31, 32 3T 530
 33, 34 3T 531
 33–356T 276
 33–37DA 503
 36, 37 COL 380; MB 42; ML 188, 232
 37 DA 504
 38–42DA 524–536; 6T 118
 39 CT 442; MM 332; TM 223, 343; 5T 367; 9T 38
 39–42TM 346
 39, 42 FE 132; MH 458; 8T 319
 40–42DA 525; WM 154

CHAPTER 11

3

1 *Christ teacheth to pray, and that instantly: 11 assuring that God so will give us good things. 14 He, casting out a dumb devil, rebuketh the blasphemous Pharisees: 28 and sheweth who are blessed: 29 preacheth to the people, 37 and reprehendeth the outward shew of holiness in the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers.*

1. As he was praying. [*Instruction on Prayer, Luke 11:1–13.*] Luke records nothing definite with respect to the time or the location of this incident. If Luke is here following a chronological sequence, the incident may have occurred soon after the visit to Bethany (ch. 10:38–42). If so, the time may have been near that of Jesus' visit to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Dedication, when there was an attempt to stone Him (DA 470; see on Luke 17:1; John 10:22, 31, 33). The incident may have occurred at Jerusalem, or, if not at Jerusalem, it probably took place somewhere in Peraea. For further information concerning events that took place about this time see on Matt. 19:1. The time of day may well have been early morning, Jesus' usual time for prayer of this kind (COL 139). Upon

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Lk 8:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

this occasion the disciples had been absent for a brief time (COL 140), perhaps on a mission (see on Luke 10:1), or perhaps for a brief visit to their homes (see DA 259). Concerning the personal prayer life of Jesus see on Mark 1:35; 3:13.

Teach us to pray. The disciples were greatly impressed as they listened to the manner in which Jesus prayed, intimately communing with His heavenly Father as one friend does with another. His praying was different from that of the religious leaders of the day, in fact, from anything else they had heard. Formal prayer, expressed in set phrases and seemingly directed to an impersonal God a great way off, lacks the reality and vitality that should distinguish prayer. The disciples thought that if only they could pray as Jesus prayed, their own effectiveness as disciples would be greatly increased. In view of the fact that Jesus had taught them by precept (Matt. 6:7–15) and example (Luke 9:29) how to pray, it seems likely that upon this occasion the request came from some disciples who had not been with Jesus upon similar occasions in the past. The term “disciples” need not be confined to the Twelve. These disciples may have been of the Seventy. In harmony with the request, “Teach us to pray,” Jesus responded by giving a model prayer, a parable to illustrate the spirit of prayer, and some admonition encouraging faithfulness and diligence in prayer (ch. 11:2–13).

As John also taught. Nothing is said elsewhere in Scripture about John’s teaching his disciples to pray. It would seem natural that, after his disciples had united their interests with those of Jesus (see on Mark 6:29), they would recount the things they had learned from their former master.

2. Say. This prayer might more appropriately be called the Disciples’ Prayer, for it is not altogether the type of prayer that Jesus would have prayed. It seems more appropriate for erring mortals. For instance, Jesus had no need to pray for forgiveness of sin. For comment on the prayer as Jesus gave it upon an earlier occasion see on Matt. 6:9–13 (see COL 140).

Our Father. A new name by which Jesus taught men to address God in order to strengthen their faith and to impress upon them the intimate relationship they are privileged to enjoy in fellowship with Him (COL 141, 142).

5. Which of you. For the lessons Jesus drew from this parable see on v. 8. For the circumstances under which Jesus spoke the parable see on v. 1. For the parable teaching of Jesus and for the principles for interpreting parables see pp. 203-207.

At midnight. In Oriental lands travel during the hot season sometimes takes place at night. On the other hand, it may be that this visiting friend (v. 6) was unexpectedly and unavoidably delayed on his journey.

6. A friend of mine. It is an important point in the narrative that the man did not ask for himself, but for a friend in need (see on v. 8).

I have nothing. The fact that the man had nothing of his own explains why he came at midnight for help. Consciousness that of ourselves we can do nothing (John 15:5) should, similarly, lead us to the great Source of spiritual food (see John 6:27–58). Those who would befriend men in order to make them acquainted with the great Friend of all men often feel their lack of the heavenly bread they so eagerly desire to impart to others.

7. Trouble me not. Evidently it was not stinginess, but reluctance to be disturbed that prompted the words, “Trouble me not.” Once the man had gone to the trouble of getting out of bed he provided his nocturnal visitor with all the bread he needed (v. 8).

Men may sometimes think of God as One who would prefer not to have people trouble Him, but His true character as a solicitous, loving, and generous Father is clearly set forth in vs. 9–13. The reluctance of the friend to arise and supply that which was needed in no way represents God (see v. 13). Here, the lesson of the parable is not one of comparison but of contrast.

Shut. As if he said, “shut to stay shut.” He intends that it shall be so. Making a door secure in ancient times was not so simple a task as it is today.

With me in bed. In many parts of the Orient even today all members of the family sleep together in one room, often on “pallets” on the floor, or, perhaps, on low, raised platform-style beds. For one member of the family to arise would easily awaken all.

I cannot. Actually it was only unwillingness on his part, not inability, to grant the request of his friend.

8. Importunity. Gr. *anaideia*, literally, “shamelessness,” or “impudence.” Again and again the head of the house repulsed the urgent appeals of his midnight caller (see COL 143), but the caller would not take No for an answer. “There is in genuine faith a buoyancy, a steadfastness of principle, and a fixedness of purpose, that neither time nor toil can weaken” (COL 147). Here again the parable teaches by contrast rather than by comparison (see on v. 7). God is not unwilling to grant that which is good for His earthborn children. He does not need to be persuaded or cajoled into doing something good that He would otherwise be unwilling or reluctant to do. God knows our needs, He is fully able to supply them, He is willing to provide “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20).

9. Ask. For comment on vs. 9–13 see on Matt. 7:7, 11. Prayer is not so much a matter of persuading God to accept our will concerning a matter as of our discovering His will with respect to it. He knows our needs before we ask; more than that, He knows what is best for us. In contrast, we are often but dimly conscious of our own need. We frequently think we need things that we do not need and that may even be harmful to us; conversely, we may not even be aware of our greatest needs (cf. COL 145). Prayer will bring our wills, and thus our lives, into harmony with the will of God (see COL 143). It is the divinely appointed means of educating our desires. It is not the true purpose of prayer to work a change in God, but to work a change in us so that we desire “both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13).

To the sincere suppliant God will send an answer to every petition uttered in humility and faith. He may say “Yes,” He may say “No,” or He may say simply “Wait.” Sometimes answer to prayer may be delayed because a change must come about in our own hearts before God can answer it (see DA 200). There are definite conditions to answered prayer, and if there seems to be delay, we should inquire whether the difficulty may be with us. It is an insult to God to be impatient with Him when we have not complied with the conditions under which it is possible for Him to answer prayer.

The central lesson of the parable is, of course, steadfastness in prayer. The parable also defines the kind of requests for which our Lord counsels steadfastness—prayers whose object is the blessing of our fellow men and the extension of His kingdom. “All that Christ received from God we too may have” (COL 149). Fickleness in prayer is not pleasing to God, “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). He who is fickle in prayer is not really expecting anything of God. “He that wavereth” need not “think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord” (James 1:6, 7).

14. Casting out a devil. [*A Blind and Dumb Demoniac; The Unpardonable Sin*, Luke 11:14–32=Matt. 12:22–45=Mark 3:20–30. Major comment: Matthew.] If the incident here narrated by Luke, together with the ensuing conversation, is to be considered equivalent to the parallel passage in Matthew, as seems probable, it becomes apparent that Luke is not following strict chronological order. The incident recorded by Matthew occurred nearly a year and a half before the time indicated by the context in which the event is recorded by Luke (see on Matt. 12:22; Luke 11:1). The great similarity between the two accounts, which, with the exception of Luke 11:16, 27, 28, are almost identical, seems to preclude the possibility that the incident reported by Luke was a different incident, and connected with the Peraean ministry (see on v. 1). If two incidents are described, the two must have been almost identical, including the ensuing discussion.

16. Others, tempting him. See on Matt. 12:38–42; 16:1.

24. The unclean spirit. See on Matt. 12:43–45.

27. A certain woman. She was “of the company,” that is, apparently of the group, who listened to the preceding discussion. Furthermore, the words “these things” connect the incident of vs. 27, 28 with the discussion of the preceding verses. At this point in the narrative Matthew (ch. 12:46) tells of the coming of Jesus’ mother and brothers, an incident Luke records in ch. 8:19–21. It may be that their arrival prompted this woman to make the statement here recorded.

28. Yea rather. Jesus does not contradict the woman’s eulogy of Mary; like any good mother, she is deserving of honor, and shares in the honor of a worthy son. Instead, Jesus points out the inadequacy of the speaker’s concept so far as the kingdom of heaven is concerned. Jesus neither approves nor disapproves of what she has said. Had Jesus intended that His disciples or Christians in general should accord particular honor to Mary, this stranger’s ascription of honor to her would have been an ideal opportunity for Him to set forth such a teaching, or at least to express cordial approval of what had been said, as He did when Peter acknowledged Him to be the Son of God (see on Matt. 16:17). According to the Scriptures the Christian’s recognition of the deity of Jesus is of major importance, while the idea of according special honor to Mary is not even hinted at (see on Matt. 1:18, 25; Matt. 12:48, 50; Luke 1:28, 47). In Matt. 12:46–50 Jesus seems to deny that any particular importance attaches to His mother, at least so far as Christian believers are concerned.

29. Evil generation. Concerning vs. 29–32 see on Matt. 12:38–42. It is not certain whether this is to be considered Luke’s account of the incident recorded in Matt. 12:38–42, or whether it is a later incident connected with the Peraean ministry (see DA 488; see on Luke 11:1, 33).

33. Lighted a candle. [*The Inner Light*, Luke 11:33–36. Cf. on Matt. 5:15.] The fact that Luke has already recorded Christ’s sayings about a lamp and its light in connection with the Sermon by the Sea (see on ch. 8:16) implies that the subject matter of ch. 11:33–36 was presented at a later time, probably in connection with the Peraean ministry. That Jesus did repeat much of His former teaching during this period is certain (see DA 488). These facts may also imply that vs. 14–32 record Peraean incidents (see on vs. 14, 29).

37. A certain Pharisee. [*Dining With a Pharisee*, Luke 11:37–54. Cf. on Matt. 23:1–39; Luke 20:45–47.] There seems to be no reason for not considering that the occasion referred to in vs. 37–54 is entirely distinct from that of Matt. 23:1–39; 47>Luke 20:45–47. The words “as he spake” (ch. 11:37) closely connect the remainder of the chapter

with that which precedes it. Here, Jesus is dining in the home of a Pharisee, whereas upon the other occasion He was in the courts of the Temple in Jerusalem (see on Matt. 23:38; 24:1). This incident occurred a “few months” before the close of Jesus’ ministry (COL 253; see on Luke 12:1).

The higher critical contention that Luke took various source materials as he found them and, without understanding their connection with other events in the life of Jesus, arranged them as he saw fit, has no factual basis. Modern preachers often use the same sermon material, with major or minor variations, upon many different occasions, and there is no reason whatever to think that Jesus did not do similarly in the presentation of His messages. In fact, it would be strange indeed if, in His teaching from village to village and from district to district, He had never repeated the same general truths. The verbal similarity between accounts which, as the context reveals, were clearly spoken at different times is not at all strange either. If at times the words of Luke are similar to what others wrote, even in the recording of different incidents in the life of Christ, that is no reason to deny that he was guided by the Spirit of inspiration. At the same time it should also be remembered that the gospel writers do not always follow a strictly chronological order in the presentation of the gospel narrative (see EGW Supplementary Material on 2 Peter 1:21).

Although the incident described in ch. 11:37–54 is distinct from that presented in Matt. 23:1–39, the great similarity of content makes it desirable to give the principal comment there rather than here.

Dine with him. Concerning Jewish table customs see on Mark. 2:15.

38. He marvelled. This verse may be rendered more smoothly: “The Pharisee was astonished to see that he had not first washed before luncheon” (see on Matt. 22:4). For the significance and manner of the rite of washing the hands see on Mark 7:1–8. For Jesus’ teachings on the subject see on Mark 7:9–23.

39. Make clean the outside. For comment on vs. 39, 40 see on Matt. 23:25.

Ravens. Gr. *harpagē*, “rapine,” “plunder,” “pillage,” “spoil,” or “robbery.” In Heb. 10:34 *harpagē* is translated “spoiling.” The adjective form, *harpax*, is used in referring to “ravens” wolves (see on Matt. 7:15) and to “extortioners” (see Luke 18:11; 1 Cor. 5:10; 6:10).

40. Ye fools. Gr. *aphrones*, “senseless [ones],” or “foolish [ones].” *Aphrōn* is an adjective corresponding to the noun *aphrosunē*, “foolishness.”

41. Rather give alms. Compare ch. 12:33. The meaning of v. 41 is obscure. The expression *ta enonta*, translated “such things as ye have,” occurs nowhere else in the NT, and what Jesus may have meant by it is uncertain. The KJV reading is interpretative and conjectural, as are all others. The literal Greek seems to favor the RSV rendering, “those things which are within,” that is, “within” either the “cup” and the “platter” or “within” the Pharisees themselves (see v. 39). If Jesus refers to the contents of the “cup” and the “platter,” He is suggesting that generosity toward the poor is a better way of avoiding real defilement than the scrupulous ceremonial cleansing of the containers in which food is kept. If He refers to the Pharisees themselves, He is saying that the spirit of generosity and care for the poor is a better way of attaining to cleanliness of heart than fastidious

concern for the minutiae of traditionalism (see on Mark 7:7). Compare the counsel of Jesus to the rich young ruler (see Luke 18:22, 23).

Clean unto you. See on Mark 7:19. The meaning here apparently is, “You will be pure in the sight of God,” and when this condition prevails nothing else need give you concern. However, some consider these words ironical in the sense, “You will be clean [in your own sight]” when you have given alms.

42. Woe unto you. See on Matt. 23:13.

Mint and rue. See on Matt. 23:23.

43. Uppermost seats. See on Matt. 23:6.

44. Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of these words. For comment on the scribes and Pharisees see pp. 51, 52. For the word “hypocrites” see on Matt. 6:2.

Graves which appear not. Time had erased any outward evidence of the burial places, and men could “walk over them without knowing it” (RSV). Contact with the dead brought ritual defilement.

45. One of the lawyers. This distinctive detail of the narrative in Luke does not appear in the corresponding passage in Matt. 23:27. The “lawyers” were the “scribes.” Writing for Gentiles who might misunderstand the technical Hebrew meaning attached to the word “scribe,” Luke substitutes the term “lawyer.”

Thou reproachest us also. Most of the scribes were Pharisees. The Pharisees constituted a religious sect; the scribes, or “lawyers,” were the professional expositors of the law. In the corresponding passage in Matt. 23 Jesus addresses both Pharisees and scribes from the first. This is another indication that Luke here records an incident that took place upon another occasion than that of Matthew, in spite of the great similarity between the two accounts (see on v. 37).

46. Lade men. See on Matt. 23:4.

47. Build the sepulchres. For vs. 47, 48 see on Matt. 23:29, 30.

49. Wisdom of God. See on Matt. 23:34. According to 1 Cor. 1:24, 30, Jesus Himself is “the wisdom of God” incarnate, but it is doubtful that Jesus here refers to Himself. More likely He means, “God in His wisdom.” There is no book known to have borne this expression as its title.

50. The prophets. For vs. 50, 51 see on Matt. 23:35, 36.

Foundation of the world. See Matt. 13:35; 25:34; Rev. 13:8.

This generation. See on Matt. 12:39; 23:36; 24:34.

52. Key of knowledge. Compare on Matt. 23:13. The “key of knowledge” is the key that opens the door to knowledge, that is, the knowledge of salvation, as the context here and in Matt. 23:13 makes plain. For a similar use of the word “keys” see on Matt. 16:19.

53. As he said these things. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “as He went away from thence.”

The scribes and the Pharisees. Concerning the scribes and the Pharisees see pp. 51, 52. For previous efforts on their part to hinder the work of Jesus see on Matt. 4:12; Mark 2:24; Luke 6:6, 7, 11; etc.

54. That they might accuse him. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of this clause. For two years spies from the Sanhedrin had dogged the footsteps of Jesus wherever He went in Galilee and Judea (DA 213; see on v. 53). Now they were more active than ever. But the spies heard nothing that could in the slightest degree be

construed against Him, except by the wildest distortion and deliberate misrepresentation (see on Matt. 26:59–63).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 COL 140; MB 103; 9T 278
- 1–13COL 139–149
- 4 MB 113
- 5, 6 2T 28
- 5–8COL 140
- 7–9DA 495
- 9 COL 147; 7T 214
- 9, 10 CH 380
- 9–13COL 141; TM 381
- 11, 12 EW 21; 1T 71
- 11–13CT 242
- 13 AA 50; FE 434, 537; GC 477; MB 132; 1T 120; 5T 157; 8T 22
- 21 5T 309; 6T 407
- 28 FE 339; 4T 60
- 35 PK 83; 3T 59, 65
- 37–52TM 76
- 42 EW 166; 2T 85
- 52 TM 109; 3T 441; 5T 728
- 54 COL 22; TM 108

CHAPTER 12

1 *Christ preacheth to his disciples to avoid hypocrisy and fearfulness in publishing his doctrine: 13 warneth the people to beware of covetousness, by the parable of the rich man who set up greater barns. 22 We must not be over careful of earthly things, 31 but seek the kingdom of God, 33 give alms, 36 be ready at a knock to open to our Lord whensoever he cometh. 41 Christ's ministers are to see to their charge, 49 and look for persecution. 54 The people must take this time of grace, 58 because it is a fearful thing to die without reconciliation.*

1. In the mean time. [A Warning Against the Pharisees, Luke 12:1–12.] These introductory words clearly connect the discourse recorded in ch. 12 with the incident at the home of a Pharisee recorded in ch. 11. Although upon previous occasions Jesus had set forth most of the counsel recorded in ch. 12 (see DA 408, 488), this chapter seems to be, in its entirety, a connected discourse given immediately after the incident at the home of the Pharisee (see on ch. 11:53, 54). A few months yet remained before the close of Jesus' earthly ministry (COL 253). Luke 12:2–9, 51–53 is similar to Matt. 10:26–36, the charge to the Twelve. Luke 12:22–34, 57–59 is similar to Matt. 6:25–34, 19–21; 5:25, 26. Luke 12:39–46 is similar to Matt. 24:43–51. Luke 12:54–56 resembles Matt. 16:2, 3. The theme of the entire 12th chapter of Luke is the sincerity and devotion that should characterize the true follower of Jesus, in contrast with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

An innumerable multitude. Gr. *muriades*, literally, “tens of thousands”; hence, in general usage, any vast number (see Acts 21:20). Our English word “myriad” is from *urias* (plural, *muriades*).

Trode one upon another. A graphic detail that emphasizes the size of the crowd.

First of all. The following discourse was addressed primarily to the disciples, but was intended also for the “myriads” of people. The words “first of all” should not be connected with “beware,” but with “began to say unto his disciples.”

Beware ye. See on Matt. 16:5–9. In the incident at the home of the Pharisee the disciples had seen the leaven of the Pharisees at work (see Luke 11:37–54).

Hypocrisy. Previously Jesus had defined the “leaven” of the Pharisees as their “doctrine” (see Matt. 16:12), that is, what they professed to believe and what they taught. Here the term “leaven” is applied primarily to their way of life. In theory (“doctrine”) and in practice (“hypocrisy”), by precept and by example, the influence of the Pharisees led men away from God and truth. For the word “hypocrite” see on Matt. 6:2; 23:13.

2. Nothing covered. For comment on vs. 2–9 see on Matt. 10:27–33.

3. Closets. Literally, “[inner] chambers,” where goods were commonly stored.

5. Hell. Gr. *geena* (see on Matt. 5:22; Jer. 19:2).

6. Five sparrows. In the parallel passage in Matthew (ch. 10:29) two sparrows are sold for one “farthing.”

Farthings. Gr. *assaria* (see p. 49; see on Matt. 10:29).

8. Confess. Literally, “agree with,” and hence “acknowledge.”

10. A word against. See on Matt. 12:32.

Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

11. Magistrates, and powers. Literally, “leaders, and authorities.” For comment on vs. 11, 12 see on Matt. 10:19, 20.

13. One. [*The Folly of Riches, Luke 12:13–34.* On parables see pp. 203–207.] That is, one of the “multitude” (see v. 1) that awaited Christ in the street outside the home of the Pharisee who had entertained Him (see ch. 11:37). This man who addressed Jesus had heard the Lord’s stern denunciations against the scribes and Pharisees (see ch. 11:39–52; COL 253) and His counsel to the disciples about appearing before magistrates (see ch. 12:11; cf. COL 252). He reasoned that if Jesus should speak to his brother with the same bold authority, he would not dare to do otherwise than what Jesus told him to do. He conceived of the gospel of the kingdom as nothing more than a means for furthering his own selfish interests. Compare the attitude of Simon Magus toward salvation (Acts 8:9–24).

Company. Gr. *ochlos*, “crowd.” *Ochlos* is translated “people” in v. 1. For the chronological setting of this incident see on v. 1.

Speak to my brother. Rather, “order my brother.” Apparently both brothers were covetous; otherwise there would have been little likelihood of a quarrel between them.

Divide the inheritance. According to the Mosaic law of inheritance, the older brother received two shares of his father’s goods, and the remaining brother or brothers a single share each (see on Deut. 21:17). Perhaps it was the younger son who in this case appealed to Jesus and objected to the older brother’s actually taking the double portion assigned to him by law.

14. Man. This form of address implies sternness or severity (see Luke 22:58, 60; Rom. 2:1; 9:20).

A judge or a divider. The kingdom Jesus came to proclaim was “not of this world” (see John 18:36). He never commissioned His disciples as agents of social justice, important as that may be, nor did He at any time attempt to adjudicate between men (see

John 8:3–11). Like the prophets of old (Micah 6:8; etc.), Jesus clearly set forth the principles that should govern a man's relationships with his fellow men (see on Matt. 5:38–47; 6:14, 15; 7:1–6, 12; 22:39; etc.), but left the administration of civil justice exclusively to the duly appointed civil authorities. In no instance did He deviate from this rule, and those who speak in His name would do well to follow His example in this as in other respects (COL 254).

15. Covetousness. Gr. *pleonexia* (see on Mark 7:22). Covetousness may be defined as undue affection for the material things of life, especially those belonging to someone else. The man addressing Christ did not need more riches; what he needed was to have covetousness erased from his heart, after which riches would be of little concern to him. If there were no more covetousness in the heart, there would be no dispute to settle. As always, Jesus went to the root of the difficulty and proposed a solution that would preclude the necessity of similar problems arising in the future. He put forward no temporary panaceas, such as those represented by the social gospel today. What men need most is not higher wages or larger profits. They need a change of heart and mind that will lead them to seek “first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,” in full confidence that the necessities of life will “be added” (see on Matt. 6:33).

Abundance of the things. See on Matt. 6:24–34. Materialism is at the root of many of the world's major problems today. It provides the basis for most political and economic philosophies, and is thus responsible for most of the class and national conflicts that plague mankind. Dissatisfaction with what we have creates the desire to secure more by forcing others to give up all or part of what they have rather than by toiling honestly ourselves. Covetousness is the cause of many of the world's insoluble problems.

The request of the man who appealed to Jesus to assume the role of judge over his brother's conduct was prompted by the same spirit that leads some industrialists to grasp for larger profits irrespective of the means by which they are secured, that leads some laborers to demand an ever-increasing wage irrespective of the value of their own contribution to the production of wealth and the ability of their employer to pay. It is the spirit that leads one group of interests to secure legislation favorable to it, with no concern as to how such legislation will affect other groups in a country; that leads a nation to impose its will upon other peoples, irrespective of the desires or best interests of the people concerned. It is the spirit that often leads to broken homes, to juvenile delinquency, and to numerous crimes.

God calls upon all who would love and serve Him to view the material things of life in their true perspective, and to subordinate these to things of eternal value (see on Matt. 6:24–34; John 6:27). Contrary to the opinion held by most people, more “things” do not necessarily mean more happiness. Happiness depends, not on “things,” but on the state of one's mind and heart (see on Eccl. 2:1–11).

16. A parable. For the parable teaching of Jesus and for principles governing their interpretation see pp. 203–207. This parable, reported only by Luke, illustrates the principle stated in v. 15, that material “things” are not the most important goal in life (see also on Matt. 19:16–22). This parable might well be given the title “The Folly of a Life Devoted to the Acquisition of Riches.”

The ground. Man buries the seed in the soil and cares for it the best he can, but it is God who makes the seed grow (see on Mark 4:26–29). Whatever man may contribute to the process of growth, it is God who gives the increase (see 1 Cor. 3:6, 7). It is God who

sends the sunshine and the rain (see on Matt. 5:45) and blesses man's efforts with "fruitful seasons" (see Acts 14:17). Before Israel entered into the Promised Land God warned them not to forget that it is He who gives man the "power to get wealth" (see Deut. 8:11–18). Yet man has ever been prone to take credit to himself for what God gives him, saying in his heart, "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" (Deut. 8:17). Fatal deception! He whose heart is not thankful toward God will become "vain" in his "imagination" and his "foolish heart" will be "darkened" (see Rom. 1:21). Wise in his own conceit, he makes himself a fool in the eyes of God (see Rom. 1:22). If he persists in such a course, he ultimately dismisses God from his thoughts completely and gives himself up to the pursuit of material happiness and physical pleasure (see Rom. 1:23–32). He becomes a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God (2 Tim. 3:4).

17. Thought within himself. That is, he considered the matter back and forth. He "reasoned" the matter through to what seemed to him a logical conclusion.

I have no room. Realization of this fact should have led him to think of the many who were in need of the very things that God had bestowed upon him in such abundance. But his selfish interests blinded his eyes to the needs of his fellow men (see on ch. 16:19–31).

Bestow. Literally, "gather together."

18. My fruits. Notice his possessiveness: "my fruits," "my barns," "my goods," "my soul" (cf. Hosea 2:5). His thoughts were all of self. Evidently he did not realize that "he that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord" (Prov. 19:17).

19. Soul. See on Matt. 10:28.

Take thine ease. He has made his fortune and is ready to retire. He will give himself up to consuming the good things of life, with no further thought of producing.

Eat, drink, and be merry. He feels certain that he has enough to last the rest of his life, and will spend his days in riotous living, as did the prodigal son in the far country, forgetting God and his fellow men (see on Luke 15:13; cf. Eccl. 8:15).

20. Fool. See on ch. 11:40. Jesus does not say that God actually uttered these words to the "fool" or even brought to him an awareness of this appellation, any more than our Lord means to imply that the conversation between the rich man and "father Abraham" (ch. 16:24–31) actually took place. In both instances the conversation is supplied for the benefit of the audience listening to the parable, that they may see the divine principle illustrated by the parable. Compare also the conversation between the trees of the forest (Judges 9:8–15).

Thy soul. The clause reads literally, "they are requiring thy soul of thee." Some suggest that the impersonal "they" is a rabbinical circumlocution to avoid use of the divine name (see on ch. 15:7). Others refer the pronoun to the "destroyers" (see Job 33:22).

21. Treasure for himself. Any man who thinks and plans exclusively for himself lacks of good sense (see on ch. 11:40) in the sight of God. The gospel of the kingdom is designed to take men's thoughts away from self and direct them upward toward God and outward toward their fellow men. For the principle here involved see on ch. 12:15.

Toward God. That is, in the sight of God. The "fool" has no treasure laid up in heaven (see on Matt. 6:19–23).

22. Said unto. Having answered the man who interrupted His discourse, Jesus resumes His address to the throng in general and to His disciples in particular (see on vs. 1, 13).

Take no thought. Literally, “do not be anxious,” or “take no [anxious] thought” (see on Matt. 6:25). For comment on Luke 12:22–34 see on Matt. 6:19–21, 25–33.

23. Meat. Gr. *trophē*, “nourishment,” “food,” “victuals” (see on Matt. 3:4).

25. Add to his stature. See on Matt. 6:27.

29. Seek not ye. The Greek stresses “ye.”

33. Bags. Gr. *ballantia*, “purses” (see ch. 10:4).

35. Let your loins be girded. [*Awaiting the Master’s Return, Luke 12:35–39.* On parables see pp. 203–207.] That is, be prepared for action (see on Ps. 65:6). Watchfulness is the keynote of this brief parable. Here for the first time Jesus teaches publicly concerning His second coming. The close of His earthly ministry is already in sight. He therefore sought to prepare men for His ascension and return in power and glory. The emphasis of the parable is upon right living in view of the Master’s return.

36. Wait. Not in idleness, but in watchfulness and earnest preparation. Compare the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1–12).

37. Blessed. Or, “happy” (see on Matt. 5:3).

Verily. See on Matt. 5:18.

Gird himself. See on Ps. 65:6. That is, in appreciation for their faithfulness and loyalty to him.

38. Second watch. That is, between approximately 9 P.M. and midnight (see on Matt. 14:25).

Third watch. Approximately from midnight to 3 A.M.

39. Goodman of the house. Gr. *oikodespotēs*, “master of the house” (see on ch. 2:29). See on Prov. 7:19.

Broken through. Many Oriental houses were made of mud walls, and the easiest way for a thief to get into them was by digging a hole through the walls (cf. Eze. 12:5, 12).

41. Peter said. As usual, Peter acts as self-appointed spokesman for the Twelve (see on Matt. 14:28; 16:16; 17:14).

Or even to all. Both the Twelve and the multitude were present (see on v. 1), and Peter evidently wondered whether Jesus’ admonition about watching had a special application to the disciples, as “servants” of the “master” in the parable, or whether it applied to the throng in general.

42. That faithful and wise steward. For comment on vs. 42–46 see on Matt. 24:45–51.

47. Knew his lord’s will. See on Matt. 7:21–27. God measures a man’s accountability by his knowledge of duty, including truth he might have known but did not avail himself of (see Eze. 3:18–21; 18:2–32; 33:12–20; Luke 23:34; John 15:22; 1 Tim. 1:13; James 4:17).

49. Send fire. The Greek stresses “fire.” For vs. 49–53 see on Matt. 10:34–36.

What will I? The meaning of the remainder of v. 49 is not clear. One possible translation is: “How I wish that it were already kindled!”

50. I have a baptism. Clearly not Jesus’ baptism at the hands of John, now more than three years in the past, but rather the “baptism” of His death (see on Matt. 3:11). The word

“baptize,” when used figuratively, as here, means to be “immersed” in circumstances which bring one face to face with death, as one would be if immersed in water for any considerable length of time.

54. When ye see a cloud. For comment on vs. 54–56 see on Matt. 16:2, 3.

57. Judge ye not. For comment on vs. 57–59 see on Matt. 5:25, 26.

58. Adversary. Gr. *antidikos*, “an opponent [in a law suit],” hence “an enemy,” or “an adversary.”

Hale thee. Literally, “drag you down [forcibly].”

The officer. The one to whom the fine was to be paid. Inability to pay meant imprisonment. For the ancient custom of imprisonment for debt see on Matt. 18:25.

59. Mite. Gr. *lepton*, a very small brass coin (see p. 49; cf. ch. 21:2).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 COL 96; DA 408

1–7Ev 237

2 MH 486

3–7EW 28

6, 7 4T 564

8, 9 5T 437

11 FE 202

13 COL 253; 9T 216

13–21COL 252–259

14 9T 217

14–21COL 254

15 COL 259; PP 496; 3T 547; 4T 82

15–213T 545

15–232T 662

16–212T 199; 3T 154, 401

17–215T 260

18, 19 COL 256

19 CS 232; 6T 452

20 COL 343; CS 142; PP 668

20, 21 COL 258

21 2T 196, 233, 246, 280, 681; 3T 546; 4T 386; 5T 262

22–26Ev 237

23 CG 366; Ed 200

24 CG 58; Ed 117

27 SC 68

27–31Ev 238

30 MB 99

32–34DA 496

33 CH 18; COL 370, 374; CS 40, 86, 114, 126, 151; Ed 145; EW 57, 95; FE 210; MH 216; TM 395; 1T 169, 175, 176, 192, 197; 2T 242, 280 676, 681; 3T 90, 402, 546; 5T 152, 259, 734; 6T 258; 7T 291, 295; 8T 35; 9T 131

33, 34 GW 341; 5T 465

33–406T 453

35 AA 55; Ev 473; FE 366; ML 217; 6T 116; 9T 48, 61, 133, 148
 36 GC 427
 36, 37 EW 19, 55; 2T 195
 36–382T 192
 37 DA 634; 1T 69; 5T 485; 9T 287
 42 DA 634; Ev 345, 373, 432; TM 149; 2T 557, 642; 6T 75, 78
 47 COL 353; 2T 251; 4T 249; 5T 160
 47, 48 CS 137; 1T 133; 8T 96
 48 AA 337; COL 265, 362; Ev 563; PP 420, 528; SR 168; TM 454; 1T 170; 3T 392; 7T 200

CHAPTER 13

1 *Christ preacheth repentance upon the punishment of the Galilæans, and others.* 6 *The fruitless fig three may not stand.* 11 *He healeth the crooked woman:* 18 *sheweth the powerful working of the word in the hearts of his chosen, by the parable of the grain of mustard seed, and of leaven:* 24 *exhorteth to enter in at the strait gate,* 31 *and reproveth Herod and Jerusalem.*

1. There were present. [*Divine Justice and Mercy, Luke 13:1–9.* On parables see pp. 203–207.] Or, “there arrived.” The massacre had just occurred (COL 212, 213), and it may be that the persons who spoke to Christ were the first to bring news of the incident.

At that season. A common Lucan idiom indicating close relationship to the preceding section (see on ch. 12:1). The season was probably the winter of A.D. 30–31. Jesus had been speaking about the signs of the times.

Some that told him. Who these persons were or what their motive was in making this report is not known. There seems no reason to think that their motive was ulterior.

The Galilæans. This particular massacre is not mentioned by any writer other than Luke, though Josephus refers to many similar massacres perpetrated by Pilate and various other administrators of the province of Judea (*Antiquities* xvii. 9. 3; xviii. 3. 2; xx. 5. 3; *War* ii. 2. 5; 9. 4 [30; 175–177]). A massacre of Samaritan worshipers on Mt. Gerizim a few years later, in A.D. 36, led to the recall of Pilate by Caesar (*Antiquities* xviii. 4. 1, 2).

Mingled. They were slaughtered while engaged in the very act of offering sacrifices.

2. Sinners above all. This answer implies that the massacre was considered by the messengers and the audience gathered about Jesus, as a divine judgment, at least to some degree, on those who had lost their lives (cf. Job 4:7; 8:4, 20; 22:5; John 9:1, 2). This conclusion Jesus emphatically denies. Whenever a convenient opportunity arose Jesus repudiated the popular notion that suffering is necessarily a punishment for sin. The temptation to think of accident or misfortune as an “act of God” comes from Satan, who seeks thereby to have men consider God a harsh and cruel Father.

3. Repent. According to the Greek, “repent, and keep on repenting.” Punishment for sin is meted out on the last great day of judgment. Jesus condemns neither Pilate nor the Galileans. If any of the Jews had hoped to elicit from Him a denunciation of Pilate’s cruelty, they were disappointed. From every experience of life the Christian may learn, if he will, how to walk before God more perfectly with a humble heart. Disappointment, misfortune, and calamity, whether witnessed or experienced, can teach the humble, receptive child of God precious lessons that can be learned in no other way.

4. Tower in Siloam. Probably connected with the Pool of Siloam, and no doubt part of the fortifications system of Jerusalem. Concerning the Pool of Siloam see Vol. I, p. 120; Vol. II, p. 87; and on 2 Kings 20:20; Neh. 3:15; John 9:7.

Sinners. Gr. *opheiletai*, literally, “debtors”; hence used here in the sense of “offenders”; not *hamartōloi*, “sinners,” as in v. 2 (cf. Matt. 6:12; Luke 7:41).

5. Repent. See on v. 3.

6. This parable. Concerning the parable teaching of Jesus and principles for the interpretation of parables see pp. 203–207. In giving this parable Jesus designed to show the relationship between divine mercy and divine justice (COL 212). Also, the long-suffering of God is set forth in relationship to the need for timely repentance on man’s part.

A fig tree. The fig tree aptly illustrates the truth that God loves even those who are unfruitful, but that His mercy can, at last, be exhausted. The fig tree was to be cut down unless it brought forth acceptable fruit (cf. Isa. 5:1–7). In a general sense the fig tree represents every individual, and in a special sense, the Jewish nation.

In his vineyard. It is a common sight today to find fig trees growing among the vines in the gardens of Palestine.

Found none. See on Mark 11:13.

7. Dresser of his vineyard. Literally, “vine worker.”

These three years. Three years had passed by since the owner of the vineyard considered that this particular tree had reached the age when fruit might be expected of it. He had given it ample opportunity to bear fruit if it was ever going to do so.

Cut it down. Literally, “cut it out,” that is, “from among” the vines of the vineyard.

Cumbereth it. The Greek has in addition the word “also.” In other words, in addition to bearing no fruit itself, the tree also took up space that might otherwise be made productive. The Jewish nation had come to the place where it was not merely useless, so far as fulfilling the role God had appointed it; it had become an obstruction to the carrying out of the plan of salvation for others (COL 215; see Vol. IV, pp. 31–33).

8. Let it alone. It has been suggested that the “three years” (v. 7) refer figuratively to the first three years inclusive of Jesus’ ministry. The present would be the year of grace after the “three years,” for it had now been more than three years since Jesus’ baptism (see on Matt. 4:12), and but a few months remained before the crucifixion (see on Luke 13:1). The mercy of God still waited and appealed to the Jewish nation to repent and accept Jesus as the Messiah. But linked with the extension of mercy was the implied warning that this one more opportunity would be the last.

Dig about it, and dung it. The “vine worker” (see on v. 7) had no doubt given the tree at least as much care as he had the other trees in the vineyard. But in this last attempt to help it bear fruit he seems to have done more than ever before (see Isa. 5:1–4; see on Matt. 21:37).

9. If it bear fruit, well. Note that the word “well” is italicized, a supplied word in English. The Greek represents an unusual figure of speech—aposiopesis—in which there is a sudden break in the thought. Nothing is said about the outcome of the experiment.

10. Teaching. [*The Crippled Woman, Luke 13:10–17.* On miracles see pp. 208–213.] Probably in Peraea, a few months before the crucifixion (see on v. 1). This is the last instance of Jesus teaching in a synagogue that is mentioned in the gospel narrative. For a description of the synagogue and its services, see pp. 56, 57. For a previous occasion on

which Jesus was challenged by the authorities for healing in a synagogue on the Sabbath see on Mark 3:1–6. For other synagogue experiences see Luke 4:16–30; Mark 1:21–28. For another incident of healing on the Sabbath see John 9:1–14. For a list of Sabbath miracles see pp. 210–212.

Sabbath. Though the Greek is plural, in harmony with common Jewish usage, the meaning is singular—it was on one particular Sabbath day.

11. Bowed together. Gr. *sugkuptō*, “to bow down,” or “to bend double,” as from a burden. The term is also used as a Greek medical term to refer to curvature of the spine.

12. Loosed. That is, “set free,” in the sense of being freed to remain free.

13. Laid his hands. See on Mark 1:31; 7:33; cf. Luke 4:40; 5:13; 8:54; 22:51.

14. The ruler. See p. 56; see on Mark 5:22.

Answered. No one had spoken to the ruler or asked him a question. He was responding to the situation created by the healing of the infirm woman, and in this sense what he said was an “answer” (see on ch. 14:3).

Unto the people. The ruler of the synagogue was angry at Jesus, but apparently he hesitated to address his attack to Jesus personally and therefore addressed his remarks to the audience.

There are six days. According to rabbinical regulations emergency cases might be given a minimum of attention on the Sabbath, but not chronic cases. It is possible that this woman had been attending this particular synagogue for the entire 18 years of her “infirmity,” and her case would not be classified as urgent. According to this line of reasoning, the woman could as well wait till after the Sabbath (see on Mark 1:32, 33; 3:1–6; John 5:16).

15. Thou hypocrite. Important textual evidence (cf. p. 146) may be cited for the reading “hypocrites.” Jesus included both the ruler of the synagogue and all who agreed with him or felt sympathetic toward him. For the word translated “hypocrite” see on Matt. 7:5; 6:2.

Stall. Or, “manger.” In the NT the Greek word appears only here and in ch. 2:7, 12, 16 (see on ch. 2:7).

16. A daughter of Abraham. She not only was a human being, and thus infinitely more important than an animal, but was of the favored race. This argument would probably appeal to the people and effectively silence the ruler of the synagogue (see v. 17), though it might not convince him that he was wrong.

Satan hath bound. Compare Isa. 61:1–3, where Isaiah says of the Messiah that He would set free Satan’s captives. This does not necessarily imply that the woman had been a special object of Satan’s efforts. Jesus probably here points to Satan simply as the one ultimately responsible for all disease.

17. People rejoiced. Jesus’ interest in the woman was an implied rebuke to the ruler of the synagogue, who had apparently done nothing for her during the 18 years of her “infirmity.” He looked upon Jesus “with indignation” (v. 14); the people, with rejoicing.

18. The kingdom of God. [*Growth of the Kingdom of Heaven, Luke 13:18–30. Cf. on Matt. 13:31–33. On parables see pp. 203–207.*] See on Matt. 3:2; 5:2, 3; Mark 3:14; Luke 4:19.

Resemble. Rather, “compare,” an archaic meaning of “resemble.”

19. A grain of mustard seed. Here Christ repeats one of the parables He had used by the Lake of Galilee nearly a year and a half before (see DA 488; see on Matt. 13:31, 32).

21. Leaven. Another parable Jesus had no doubt used upon various occasions (see on Matt. 13:33).

22. Journeying toward Jerusalem. See on Matt. 19:1. Whether this is to be considered part of the long journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, through Samaria and Peraea, or another journey taken later, from Peraea to Jerusalem, is not certain. The final departure from Galilee probably took place some time before this, and this should, therefore, probably be considered a separate journey. Although Jesus' activities centered in Peraea and Samaria during the final six months of His ministry, He did visit Bethany and Jerusalem upon various occasions, though but briefly each time because of the animosity of the Jewish leaders. See on Luke 9:51.

23. Then said one. The identity of the speaker is not known.

Few that be saved. This is said to be an abstract, theoretical, theological question the rabbis delighted to discuss.

24. Strive. Gr. *agōnizomai*, related to the nouns *agōn*, "a contest," "a trial," "a struggle," and *agōnia*, "fear," "anguish." Our English word "agony" is derived from *agōnia*. *Agōnizomai* originally referred to the effort put forth by a contestant in an athletic contest to qualify for the prize, and hence came to mean in a general sense "to struggle," or "to exert oneself." *Agōnizomai* is sometimes used in the NT of the Christian's efforts to qualify for entrance into the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 9:25; Col. 1:29). It is also translated "fight" in 1 Tim. 6:12, with reference to fighting the good fight of faith (see 2 Tim. 4:7). In John 18:36 it is used in the sense, "then would my servants exert themselves." See on Matt. 7:13, 14.

Jesus did not directly answer the man's question (v. 23). Instead, His answer is based on the truth that our primary concern should be, not how many are going to be saved, but rather whether we ourselves will be. In the parable of the Mustard Seed Jesus taught that many would enter the kingdom (see on Matt. 13:31, 32), and in the parable of the Leaven He emphasized the transforming influence of the gospel upon the life that prepares one for the kingdom (see on Matt. 13:33).

25. Shut to the door. For comment see on Matt. 25:1–13. For the significance of the shut door see on Matt. 25:7.

I know you not. For comment see on Matt. 7:23; 25:12.

26. Taught in our streets. See on Matt. 7:22.

27. Depart from me. See on Matt. 7:23.

Ye workers of iniquity. See on Matt. 7:21–28.

28. Weeping and gnashing of teeth. See on Matt. 8:12; 13:42.

Yourselves thrust out. See on Matt. 22:11–14; cf. Luke 16:22, 23.

29. Come from the east. Here Jesus quotes, in part, the words of Isa. 49:12, which refer to the ingathering of the Gentiles into the household of God (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–33).

Sit down. Literally, "recline," the usual posture at feasts (see on Mark 2:15). To sit down at the feast of the Messianic kingdom was a common Jewish way of referring to the joys of that kingdom (see on Luke 14:15; cf. Rev. 19:9).

30. First which shall be last. Jesus repeated this saying upon various occasions (see Matt. 19:30; 20:16) as a warning to those who considered themselves certain of admission to the kingdom of the Messiah on the basis that they were children of

Abraham. Those who had the best chance to enter had not taken advantage of their opportunities (see Vol. IV, pp. 26-33), but had slighted the advantages accorded them (see on Luke 14:18–24). The Gentiles, whom the Jews despised and considered unworthy and ineligible to enter the kingdom, would, in many instances, more certainly obtain a place at the Messianic table, for the simple reason that they had made better use of their opportunities than had the Jews.

31. The same day. [*A Warning of Divine Judgment, Luke 13:31–35.*] Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “in that hour.” Luke commonly uses this expression to denote a close time relationship with the preceding part of the narrative. For the present circumstances see on v. 1.

Pharisees. See on pp. 51, 52. The Pharisees, as a class, were now Jesus’ sworn enemies, bent upon His death. See on Matt. 19:3; 20:18, 19.

Depart hence. Apparently this incident took place within the domain of Herod Antipas, which included Galilee and Peraea (see on ch. 3:1). Inasmuch as Jesus had, a number of weeks prior to this, taken His final departure from Galilee (see on Matt. 19:1, 2), He now must have been in Peraea.

Herod will kill thee. Literally, “Herod is of a mind to kill thee.” It was approximately a year prior to this that Herod had taken the life of John the Baptist (see on Mark 6:14–29). In view of the awe in which Herod held Jesus (see on Matt. 14:1, 2), and his desire to see Him (see Luke 23:8), it is most unlikely that he actually sought Jesus’ life. Apparently the Pharisees used this device in an attempt to frighten Jesus out of Peraea into Judea, where they could lay hands on Him themselves. For nearly two years the Jewish leaders had been plotting His death (see DA 213, 401; John 11:53, 54, 57; see on Matt. 15:21), and the Jews had recently tried twice to stone Him (see John 8:59; 10:31; 11:8).

32. That fox. Probably with emphasis on Herod’s craftiness rather than upon his rapacity. See p. 64.

To day and to morrow. Jesus’ time has not yet come; there is still work for Him to do.

The third day. This is a clear illustration of the common Oriental custom of inclusive reckoning. The “third” day according to Jewish reckoning would be “the day following” tomorrow (v. 33); we would call it the second day. For further comment on inclusive reckoning see Vol. I, p. 182; Vol. V, pp. 248–250. Here, however, Christ speaks figuratively of the time when His ministry will close. That time, though not in the immediate future, is nevertheless not far away.

Be perfected. Gr. *teleioō*, “to finish,” “to complete,” “to perfect,” or “to bring to an end” (see on Matt. 5:48). Probably Jesus here refers to His coming death, which would “perfect,” that is, “complete,” His earthly ministry. According to Heb. 2:10, Jesus was made “perfect” through suffering (cf. Heb. 5:9). In His intercessory prayer, prior to entering the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus declared: “I have finished [Gr. *teleioō*] the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4). Concerning the fore-ordained plan for Jesus’ life see on Luke 2:49.

33. I must walk to day. See on ch. 2:49. He must continue His appointed work, and will not interrupt His ministry for Herod’s sake. Day is the usual time for walking and working.

Perish out of Jerusalem. That is, a prophet cannot perish away from Jerusalem. Jesus does not mean that Jerusalem could not be without a prophet, but rather that Jerusalem was the city that killed the prophets, as He explains immediately (v. 34). Jesus is not concerned about His safety while laboring in the territory under Herod's jurisdiction. He knows full well that He will be killed in Jerusalem.

34. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem. For comment on vs. 34, 35 see on Matt. 23:37–39.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–9COL 212–218

2, 3 COL 213

5 Ev 179

6 DA 584; 3T 534

6, 7 COL 214; DA 495; 5T 250

6–9DA 584; 7T 200

7 ChS 89; COL 218; GC 27, 601; 2T 89; 3T 191; 4T 317, 385; 5T 81, 139, 185, 352, 612

7, 8 2T 421

7–94T 188

8 COL 215

9 COL 216, 218

18, 19 COL 76–79

20, 21 COL 95–102

23 2T 294

24 COL 280; CT 366; FE 124; MB 141; ML 340; PK 84; 1T 127, 484; 2T 446, 480; 3T 527; 4T 218; 5T 17; 8T 65

25 Ed 264; FE 355

26, 27 COL 412; DA 825

34, 35 COL 237; MB 151; 4T 487

35 DA 242; EW 292; 5T 126

CHAPTER 14

2 *Christ healeth the dropsy on the sabbath: 7 teacheth humility: 12 to feast the poor: 15 under the parable of the great supper, sheweth how worldly minded men, who contemn the word of God, shall be shut out of heaven. 25 Those who will be his disciples, to bear their cross must make their accounts aforehand, lest with shame they revolt from him afterward, 34 and become altogether unprofitable, like salt that hath lost his savour.*

1. He went into the house. [*Dining With a Chief Pharisee, Luke 14:1–15.* On miracles see pp. 208–213; on parables, pp. 203–207.] There are no clues as to the time and place of this incident, except that the context in which it appears in the Gospel of Luke implies that it may have been in Peraea, between the Feast of Dedication in the winter of A.D. 30–31 and Passover the following spring.

One of the chief Pharisees. Compare a previous occasion on which Jesus had accepted the dinner invitation of a Pharisee (ch. 11:37–54). The present narrative implies that Jesus' host upon this occasion was an influential and wealthy rabbi. There is no Scripture record that Jesus ever refused an invitation, whether it was from Pharisee or publican (see on Mark 2:15–17).

Eat bread. A common Jewish idiom meaning “dine.”

Sabbath. It seems to have been fairly common among the Jews of Christ's time to entertain on the Sabbath. The food was, no doubt, prepared the day before and kept

warm, or possibly eaten cold. It was considered unlawful to light a fire on the Sabbath (see on Ex. 16:23; 35:3); hence, all food was to be prepared on the day preceding the Sabbath (see on Ex. 16:23). A feast to which friends were invited was commonly viewed as a type of the blessings of eternal life (see on Luke 14:15; cf. COL 219).

They watched him. No doubt there were spies present on this occasion (see on ch. 11:54), watching with evil intent (see on ch. 6:7). Whether the spies had arranged for the man with “dropsy” to be present, we do not know. But they had observed in times past that Jesus did not hesitate to heal a man on the Sabbath, in contravention of their legal tradition, and probably they presumed that He would again do so. Altogether seven instances of the healing of individuals on the Sabbath are reported in the gospel narratives, this being the seventh and the last in point of time (see Luke 4:33–36, 39; 6:6–10; 13:10–17; 14:2–4; John 5:5–10; 9:1–14).

2. Dropsy. Gr. *hudrōpikos*, a common medical term derived from the Gr. *hudōr*, “water,” and descriptive of the condition of one who has a surplus of fluid in the body tissues. The word occurs only here in Biblical Greek. This is the only recorded example of such a case coming to the attention of Jesus. He may have come of his own volition, in the hope of being healed, though the record does not state that he presented himself before Jesus for healing. It is conceivable, as some have suggested, that certain of the Pharisees present had arranged for the sick man to be there, in order to trap Jesus into healing him on the Sabbath. The healing apparently took place prior to the time that those invited actually sat down at the table (see v. 7).

3. Jesus answering. Jesus did not “answer” in the sense of replying to any question addressed to Him. He was “answering” the thoughts of the Pharisees, who were watching to see what He would do. The use of the word “answer” in this sense is common in Hebrew (see on ch. 13:14).

The lawyers and Pharisees. In Greek there is but one definite article for both words. This indicates that here they are treated as belonging to one group rather than to two (cf. ch. 7:30, where the definite article appears twice in the Greek). Concerning “lawyers” and “Pharisees” see pp. 51, 52, 55.

Is it lawful? Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for adding “or not.”

4. They held their peace. That is, “they were silent.” Conversation ceased; they declined to answer. Apparently realizing that they could gain nothing by speaking, they took refuge in silence, and a hush fell over the room. They did not dare to say that it was “lawful,” for their own rabbinical regulations seemed to forbid healing in a case such as this, nor did they care to say that it was not. Luke seems to be fond of noting occasions when the foes of the gospel “held their peace,” or were put to silence (Luke 20:26; Acts 15:12; 22:2).

Took him. That is, “took hold of him.”

Let ... go. Gr. *apoluō*, “to set free,” “to release,” “to let go,” or “to dismiss.” This seems to have been before the beginning of the meal (see v. 7). Perhaps Jesus sought to save the man from embarrassment and perplexity such as the Jewish leaders had recently brought upon another who was healed on the Sabbath day (see John 9).

5. An ass. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading “son.”

Pit. Gr. *phrear*, “a well,” or “the shaft of a well or pit.”

6. They could not answer. Jesus' critics were now hopelessly on the defensive. They hated to admit that they cared more for an ox or an ass than they did for a man.

7. A parable. A "parable" need not be a narrative, it may be simply a short, pithy saying (see pp. 203, 204). The "parable" here given was probably based on Jesus' immediate observation of the guests seating themselves at the table. He "marked" how the guests "chose out" the honored seats. It seems that contention similar to this took place among the disciples at the Last Supper (see on ch. 22:24).

Rooms. Rather, "reclining places." For customs at a Jewish feast see on Mark 2:15–17. According to the Talmud the places of honor were those next to the host. Upon a later occasion Jesus, among other things, rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for seeking the places of honor at a feast (see Matt. 23:6).

8. A wedding. That is, "a wedding feast," as the context makes evident.

9. He that bade thee. Or, "the host."

And him. The honored guest.

Lowest room. That is, the lowest reclining place. All intervening places would, presumably, be taken by now, and no other place remained.

10. Sit down. Rather, "recline."

Worship. That is, "honor," an archaic meaning of the word "worship."

Them. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading "all of them."

11. Whosoever exalteth himself. Here Jesus repeats a saying that He used frequently in one form or another (see Matt. 18:4; 23:12; Luke 18:14; etc.). The principle here enunciated strikes at the very root of pride, the desire to exalt oneself in the opinion of others; and pride, in turn, along with selfishness, is the root of all sin. Jesus Himself set the supreme example of humility (see Isa. 52:13, 14; Phil. 2:6–10).

Abased. That is, "humbled." It is an axiom of life that the man whose main objective in life is the promotion of what he considers his own interests usually finds others compelling him to take a lower place.

Exalted. Conversely, the man who forgets his own interests and makes it his business to encourage and assist others is often the very one his fellow men are pleased to honor. Humility is, even more decidedly, the passport to exaltation in the kingdom of heaven, whereas the desire to exalt oneself is an effective barrier against even entering the kingdom (cf. Isa. 14:12–15; Phil. 2:5–8).

12. Dinner. Gr. *ariston*, originally meaning the first meal, or breakfast, but used later to refer to the noon meal.

Supper. Gr. *deipnon*, usually refer to the evening meal.

Call not thy friends. According to the Greek the thought may be summed up, "Do not be in the habit of always inviting only your friends." Jesus does not exclude the entertainment of friends, but rather warns against the selfish motives that lead many to entertain only those from whom they expect similar courtesies. Jesus encourages hospitality on the basis of genuine interest in the needs of our fellow men—perhaps the need for food, perhaps the need for friendship. He points out that this kind of hospitality, though not returned in the present life, will be rewarded in the life to come.

Again. That is, in return for the previous invitation.

13. Call the poor. According to the Mosaic law, this was a duty (see on Deut. 14:29). Those in need were not to be forgotten.

14. Recompensed. Literally, “rewarded,” or “repaid.”

Of the just. Mention of “the resurrection of the just” implies a similar resurrection of the “unjust” (see John 5:29; Acts 24:15).

15. One of them. For the circumstances under which the statement of v. 15 was made see on v. 1.

Blessed. Or, “happy” (see on Matt. 5:3). The unwelcome duty Jesus set forth in vs. 12–14 led to this attempt to turn the conversation into more agreeable channels (see COL 221). Jesus’ reference to the resurrection (v. 14) probably suggested to this Pharisee the pious platitude he now utters. The speaker delighted to contemplate the reward of rightdoing, but found the doing of right an unwelcome thought. He was eager to enjoy the privileges of the kingdom of heaven but unwilling to shoulder its responsibilities. He was unwilling to comply with the conditions of entrance into the kingdom, but seems to have had not the least doubt that he would be accorded an honored place at the great gospel feast.

Eat bread. That is, “dine” (see on v. 1). For the significance of the term “kingdom of God” see on Matt. 5:2, 3; Mark 3:14; Luke 4:19. In Jewish idiomatic usage to “eat bread in the kingdom of God” meant to enjoy the bliss of heaven (cf. Isa. 25:6; Luke 13:29). To be sure, the Pharisee’s statement itself was plitudinously correct, but the spirit in which it was made and the motive that prompted it were both entirely wrong. The speaker assumed, complacently, that he was sure of an invitation.

16. A great supper. [*The Great Banquet, Luke 14:16–24.* Cf. on Matt. 22:1–14]. On parables see pp. 203–207.] Jesus here refers to the bounteous blessings of the kingdom of heaven under the symbol of a great feast, a symbol apparently common to His hearers (see on v. 15). He does not challenge the sentiment of the Pharisee’s statement (v. 15), but rather calls in question the sincerity of the one who made it. Actually, the Pharisee was one of those who, at the very moment, were rejecting the gospel invitation (see on vs. 18, 24).

There are many similarities between this parable and that of the Marriage Feast of the King’s Son (see Matt. 22:1–14), but there are also many differences. The circumstances under which the two parables were given are also noticeably different. That of Luke 14 was given at the home of a Pharisee, whereas that of Matt. 22 was spoken in connection with an attempt to arrest Jesus (see Matt. 21:46).

Bade many. This represents the first invitation to the gospel feast, the invitation given to the Jews throughout OT times (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–32). It refers specifically to God’s repeated appeals to Israel through the prophets of old (cf. on vs. 21–23).

17. Sent his servant. In a special sense Jesus Himself may be considered as the “servant” sent to proclaim that “all things are now ready.” In Oriental lands even today it is customary to dispatch a messenger a short time before the feast actually begins to remind the guests of their invitation. In case a guest might have forgotten about the invitation, or might not know when he was expected to appear, this would allow him time to prepare for the occasion and to reach the place designated for the banquet. In the Orient, where less attention is paid to calendars and clocks than in Western lands, such a reminder is of practical value in that it avoids embarrassment to both the host and his guests.

18. With one consent. It almost appears that the invited guests had conspired together to insult their gracious host. There were, of course, more than three men invited to the

feast (see v. 16). Apparently the three excuses Jesus enumerates are given as examples of what the servant heard wherever he went. For a similar sampling of cases where more than three persons were involved see ch. 19:16–21.

Began. Each prospective guest contrived his own pretext, for none of them had an acceptable reason. The real reason in each case was, of course, that the invited guest found himself more interested in something else, something he would have to lay aside temporarily if he were to attend the feast. The excuses implied, also, a lack of appreciation for the hospitality and friendship of the man who gave the feast. Those who declined the invitation to the gospel feast placed more value on temporal interests than on eternal things (see Matt. 6:33).

In Oriental lands, to decline an invitation—except where it is obviously impossible to accept—is often considered a refusal of friendship. Among some Arabs, to decline an invitation at the time of the reminder (see on v. 17), after having accepted the original invitation, is considered a declaration of hostility. On the other hand, to accept an invitation and to attend a feast is supposed to indicate friendship.

Bought a piece of ground. Even accepted at face value, the excuse was flimsy—the purchase had already been made. Without doubt the purchaser had examined the ground carefully before closing the deal.

19. Five yoke of oxen. Again, the purchase had already been made. The purchaser was intent only on determining how good a bargain he had secured, a task that easily might have been postponed if he had really desired to attend the feast.

20. Cannot come. The man who made this third excuse appears to have been even more rude than the others. Whereas they had, with a show of courtesy, asked to be excused, he simply informed the servant flatly, “I cannot come.” Some feel that this man was probably basing his refusal on the fact that certain exemptions from some of the ordinary military and civil duties were accorded a man during the first year of his married life (see on Deut. 24:5). Hence he said, “I cannot come.” But this law did not exempt him from normal social relationship, and any endeavor to feign that it did so would be but hollow pretense. This man’s excuse was in reality little or no better than those of the first two men.

21. Being angry. As the servant recounted one after another the flimsy excuses, the anger of the gracious host mounted. Originally, the men had all accepted his invitation, and on the strength of their acceptances he had gone ahead with preparations for the feast. But now that preparations were complete, and the food all ready, there appeared to be a conspiracy to embarrass him (see on v. 18). Furthermore, he had been to considerable expense in preparing for the feast.

To be sure, God, who prepares the heavenly feast, does not become “angry” in the sense that human beings do. Nevertheless, in view of all He has done to provide the blessings of salvation for lost humanity, it must deeply grieve His great heart of love to have men lightly esteem His gracious invitation to righteousness and divine favor. All the resources of heaven have been invested in the work of salvation, and the least men can do is to appreciate and accept what God has provided.

Go out quickly. It is quite evident that the host does not wish to see his costly provisions wasted. If his best friends choose not to avail themselves of the tokens of his good will, he will gladly invite strangers to do so. Note further that his action is in harmony with the counsel Jesus gave immediately prior to this parable (see vs. 12–14),

counsel that seemed unwelcome to the guests at the feast Jesus was now attending and that led one of them to change the subject (see on v. 15).

Streets and lanes. That is, the broad streets and the side streets or lanes. The gospel invitation was first given to the Jewish people, here represented as residents of a “city.” The leading citizens of the city, who had declined the invitation, were the Jewish leaders, some of whom were now gathered with Jesus at a feast in the home of a Pharisee (see on v. 1). The guests who declined the invitation represented the religious aristocracy of Israel. Now the gracious host turns from his chosen friends to the strangers of the “city,” the neglected and sometimes despised members of society. They were residents of the same “city” as the invited guests, and therefore Jews. But some of them were publicans and sinners, men and women whom the religious aristocrats of the nation considered outcasts. Nevertheless, they were hungry and thirsty for the gospel (see on Matt. 5:6).

Poor, and the maimed. The Jews commonly supposed that persons suffering either financially or physically were in ill favor with God, and thus these classes were often despised and neglected by their fellow men (see on Mark 1:40; 2:10). God, presumably, had cast them off, and society therefore considered them outcasts also. In this parable Jesus denies that such persons are despised by God, and declares that they should not be despised by their fellow men, even when their sufferings may be due to their own misdeeds or unwise course of action. The poverty stricken and physically defective here seem to represent primarily those who are morally and spiritually bankrupt. They have no good works of their own to offer God in exchange of the blessings of salvation.

22. *Yet there is room.* The servant apparently realizes that the gracious host would certainly desire that the places at his banquet be filled. Likewise in the great gospel feast. God did not create the earth “in vain” (see on Isa. 45:18), an empty waste, but designated that it should be inhabited as the eternal home of a happy human race. Though sin has postponed the fulfillment of this purpose for a time, it will ultimately be achieved (see PP 67). Every individual born into the world is accorded an opportunity to partake of the gospel feast and to dwell forever in the earth made new. This parable clearly indicates that the same opportunity rejected by one will be eagerly accepted by another (cf. Rev. 3:11).

23. *Highways and hedges.* Those originally invited to the gospel feast were the Jews (see on vs. 16, 21). God had called them first, not because He loved them more than He loved their fellow men, nor because they were more worthy, but in order that they might share with others the sacred privileges entrusted to them (see Vol. IV, pp. 25-38).

Jesus was often found associating with publicans and sinners, the outcasts of society, much to the consternation of the Jewish leaders (see on Mark 2:15–17). During His Galilean ministry He labored earnestly for these, the spiritually “poor” and “maimed,” in the “streets and lanes” of Galilee (see on Luke 14:21). But when the people of Galilee rejected Him, in the spring of A.D. 30 (see on Matt. 15:21; John 6:66), Jesus repeatedly ministered to the Gentiles and the Samaritans as well as to the Jews (see on Matt. 15:21). However, the giving of the gospel invitation to those in “the highways and hedges” refers primarily to the giving of the gospel to the Gentiles following the Jews’ final rejection, as a nation, of the gospel invitation, a rejection culminating in the stoning of Stephen (see Vol. IV, pp. 33-36; Acts 1:8). The “highways and hedges” of the parable are outside the “city,” and therefore may appropriately represent non-Jewish regions—in other words, the heathen (see on Luke 14:21). When the apostles, in their evangelization of the world,

encountered the opposition of their fellow countrymen they turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46–48; cf. Rom. 1:16; 2:9).

Compel. Gr. *anagkazō*, “to constrain,” or “to compel,” whether by force or by persuasion. Some have considered that this statement justifies the use of force to convert men to Christ. But the very fact that Jesus Himself never resorted to force to compel men to believe in Him, that He never instructed His disciples to do so, and that the apostolic church never did so, makes evident that Jesus intended no such interpretation to be placed upon His words. In fact, by precept and example the Lord repeatedly counseled His disciples to avoid controversy and retaliation for grievances (see on Matt. 5:43–47; 6:14, 15; 7:1–5, 12; etc.), either as individuals or as the official heralds of the gospel (see on Matt. 10:14; 15:21; 16:13; 26:51, 52; Luke 9:55). Not only were the disciples not to persecute others (Luke 9:54–56); they were meekly to endure persecution (see on Matt. 5:10–12; 10:18–24, 28).

By the words “compel them to come in” Jesus here simply emphasizes the urgency of the invitation and the compelling force of divine grace. Loving-kindness was to be the compelling force (see COL 235). *Anagkazō* is used in this same sense in reference to an occasion when Jesus “constrained” His disciples to enter a boat (Matt. 14:22). There is a vast difference between the insistent appeal that Jesus had in mind and the resort to physical force that many professed Christians in centuries gone by have considered appropriate, and that some who profess the name of Christ would rely on today if they had the opportunity to do so.

The parable itself proves that no physical force was used at any time to secure guests for the feast. If it had been the host’s purpose to use force, he would have used it on the first group of guests invited. Invitations to the gospel feast always carry the words, “whosoever will” (Rev. 22:17). This parable lends no sanction whatever to the theory of religious persecution as a means of bringing men to Christ. Any use of force or persecution in matters of religion is a policy inspired by the devil, not by Christ.

That my house may be filled. See on v. 22. The host had invited “many” guests (see v. 16). Furthermore, when the servant first went out into the streets and lanes of the city, he was unable to find enough persons to fill the guestchamber (see v. 22).

24. None of those men. This strongly worded exclusion of the originally invited guests is the declaration of the host of the parable. But this does not mean that Heaven arbitrarily excludes anyone. The gracious host of the story simply cancels his original invitation that had been so rudely refused. Evidently his house is now “filled” (v. 23), and there is no more room. But in the kingdom of heaven there is ample room for all who are willing to enter (see on v. 22).

Jesus does not teach by this parable that earthly possessions are necessarily incompatible with the kingdom of heaven, but rather that inordinate affection for the things of earth disqualifies a person from entering heaven—in fact, it leaves him with no desire for heavenly things. A man cannot “serve two masters” (see on Matt. 6:19–24). Those who put forth their first and best efforts to accumulate earthly possessions or to enjoy earth’s pleasures will be shut out on the basis that their heart’s affection is on earthly rather than heavenly things (cf. Matt. 6:25–34). Covetousness for the things of earth eventually eliminates a desire for the things of heaven (see on Luke 12:15–21), and when covetous men are called upon to share their accumulated wealth they go away “sorrowful” (see on Matt. 19:21, 22). It is “hard” for “a rich man” to “enter into the

kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:23) for the simple reason that usually he does not sufficiently desire to enter in.

Taste of my supper. That is, in case they should change their minds at a later time. Salvation consists of the invitation extended by God, and man’s acceptance of it. Neither can be effective without the other. The Scriptures repeatedly present the possibility that those who have made light of the grace of God may seem to change their minds when it is too late, that is, when the gospel call no longer sounds (see Jer. 8:20; Matt. 25:11, 12; Luke 13:25). That call is finally withdrawn, not because any temporal limit to the mercy of God has been exceeded, but rather because those excluded have made a final, conclusive decision. If they later change their minds, that change is confined to a realization that they have made the wrong choice as far as results to themselves go, and does not mean that they have suddenly acquired a genuine desire to live in obedience to God.

25. There went great multitudes. [*The Cost of Discipleship*, Luke 14:25–35. On parables see pp. 203–207.] Nothing definite is recorded with respect to the time, place, or circumstances under which the counsel of this section was given. The time was probably rather early in the year A.D. 31, and the place, Peraea (see on v. 1). Again the multitudes thronged about Him, as during His public ministry in Galilee (see on Matt. 5:1; Mark 1:28, 37, 44, 45; 2:2, 4; 3:6–10; etc.). Now, toward the close of His ministry, there seems also to have been a growing conviction in the minds of many that He was about to proclaim Himself the leader of Israel in a revolt against Rome (see on Matt. 19:1, 2; 21:5, 9–11). Although many no doubt followed Him out of sincere motives, a majority probably did so either because of curiosity or from selfish motives.

He turned. It seems that as the throng pursued Jesus one day He halted, turned to face them squarely, and set forth the principles recorded in vs. 26–35. Many of those who followed the Master were a hindrance rather than a help to His cause. Jesus called upon them, one and all, to think through what they were doing.

26. If any man come. Jesus now sets forth the four following principles: (1) that discipleship involves cross bearing, vs. 26, 27; (2) that the cost of discipleship should be carefully counted, vs. 28–32; (3) that all personal ambitions and worldly possessions must be laid on the altar of sacrifice, v. 33; (4) that the spirit of sacrifice must be maintained permanently, vs. 34, 35.

Hate not his father. Scripture usage makes it clear that this is not “hate” in the usual sense of the word. In the Bible, “to hate,” often should be understood simply as a typical Oriental hyperbole meaning “to love less” (see Deut. 21:15–17). This fact stands forth clearly in the parallel passage where Jesus says, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37). This striking hyperbole is apparently used to make vivid to the follower of Christ the fact that at all times he must make first in his life the kingdom of heaven. Again, in regard to material possessions, the governing principle is a matter of what we make first in life (see on Matt. 6:19–34).

Cannot be my disciple. Not “will not,” but “cannot.” Whoever has personal interests that take precedence over loyalty to Christ and devotion to His service will find it impossible to meet the requirements Christ makes of him. At all times and under all circumstances the call of the kingdom must take precedence. The service of Jesus calls for the entire and permanent renunciation of self. For comment on vs. 26, 27 see on Matt. 10:37, 38.

Bear his cross. Rather, “bear his own cross” (see on Matt. 10:38, 39). Execution by crucifixion was probably introduced into Palestine by Antiochus Epiphanes (Josephus *Antiquities* xii. 5. 4 [256]).

28. Which of you? The twin parables of vs. 28–32 constitute a warning against lightly assuming the responsibilities of discipleship. Those guests who first accepted the invitation to the feast, only to change their minds when other interests arose, had not given the invitation serious thought when they first accepted it. The two following parables were especially applicable to such people.

A tower. A “tower” might be either a large and costly structure (cf. ch. 13:4) or a simple one made of branches (cf. Matt. 21:33). Here, it is obviously the former. Perhaps in the town where Jesus was at the moment teaching there had been an instance of such circumstances as those set forth in the parable.

Counteth the cost. There is no point in beginning something one cannot complete. Such a project absorbs time and energy without bringing any comparable rewards. The “cost” of discipleship is the complete and permanent renunciation of personal ambitions and of worldly interests. He who is not willing to go all the way may as well not even start.

29. Mock him. His lack of foresight incurs not only failure but also personal embarrassment.

30. This man. Sometimes “this” is used to manifest contempt or sarcasm in referring to a person (see on ch. 15:2).

31. What king? For the meaning of this parable and its relation to the discourse as a whole see on v. 28. The previous illustration is from the business world; this, from the political world, illustrates the same truth.

Twenty thousand. The odds appear against the king with 10,000, but it may be that other factors will tend to cancel out the numerical superiority of the enemy and make the prospect of victory a possibility.

32. Conditions of peace. Or, “terms of peace.”

33. So likewise. As usual, Jesus clearly states the lesson His parables are designed to teach. Discipleship involves the complete placing on the altar of all that a man has in this life—plans, ambitions, friends, relatives, possessions, riches—anything and everything that might interfere with service for the kingdom of heaven (cf. ch. 9:61, 62). Such was the experience of the apostle Paul (see Phil. 3:8–10).

34. Salt is good. For comment on vs. 34, 35 see on Matt. 5:13; cf. Mark 9:50. Here, the flavor of “salt” represents the spirit of devotion. Discipleship without this spirit of devotion, Jesus declares, is without meaning.

35. He that hath ears. For comment see on Matt. 11:15.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 COL 219

10 MH 477

11 4T 379; 5T 638

12–14COL 220; MB 112; MH 353; 6T 305

12–24COL 219–237

13 COL 370

13, 14 ML 201

14 6T 312

15 COL 223
 15–20COL 221
 16–213T 383
 16–23WM 245
 17 COL 237; Ev 16, 82, 383; FE 366; TM 231; 2T 225, 226, 295; 6T 72, 291; 7T 15, 24;
 8T 16, 72, 77, 153; 9T 36
 17, 18 3T 384
 17–20COL 224
 18 CH 507; GW 195; 4T 76; 5T 369
 18–202T 39
 20 AH 351; WM 176
 21 COL 225
 21–23WM 122
 21–242T 40
 22, 23 COL 226
 23 AA 364; CE 32, 37; CH 390; CM 24, 39; COL 228, 235, 237; CT 548; Ev 40, 45, 47,
 50, 51, 54, 60, 114, 143, 436, 458; FE 366, 529; GW 187; MH 147, 164; MM 312; TM
 198; 6T 66, 76, 79, 83, 280, 294; 8T 216; 9T 35, 115; WM 73, 98, 257
 24 COL 236, 307; DA 495
 28 CS 273; Ev 85; 7T 99, 283; 8T 191
 28–30CS 281
 30 TM 178
 33 FE 125; SC 44; 3T 397; 5T 83

CHAPTER 15

1 *The parable of the lost sheep: 8 of the piece of silver: 11 of the prodigal son.*

1. Then drew near. [*The Lost Sheep, Luke 15:1–7. Cf. on Matt. 18:12–14; John 10:1–18. On parables see pp. 203–207.*] Except for the position of the parables of this chapter in the Gospel of Luke there is no indication of either the time or location in which they were given. Chapters 9:51 to 19:28 record events connected with the Peraean ministry (see on Luke 9:51; Matt. 19:1, 2), probably from the late autumn of A.D. 30 to the early spring of A.D. 31. Apparently at least the first two parables of ch. 15, and possibly the third as well, were given upon one occasion (COL 192) in the pasture lands of Peraea (COL 186). It was now about two months before the crucifixion (see on Matt. 19:1, 2; Luke 10:25; 11:37; 12:1). In these parables Jesus set forth the meaning of that event.

All the publicans and sinners. Literally, “all the publicans and the sinners,” considering the two classes as distinct each from the other. Sometimes they are considered as one group (see on ch. 5:30). Concerning the publicans, or tax collectors, see on ch. 3:12. The “sinners” probably included men and women who made no pretense of seeking righteousness along the lines prescribed by rabbinical tradition, in addition to harlots, adulterers, and others whose lives were in open violation of the law. Strict Pharisees also considered the common people, the *‘amme ha’areṣ* (literally, “the people of the land”), who had not enjoyed the privileges of a rabbinical education, as “sinners” and beyond the pale of respectability. The very name Pharisee (see p. 51) designated the members of this party as superior to the common herd, and presumably more righteous than people generally.

The word “all” may refer to the fact that wherever Jesus went during this part of His ministry the “publicans” and “sinners” of the region flocked to hear Him. This evidence of interest angered the scribes and Pharisees still further, for they held these classes in contempt, and were in turn shunned by them. It irritated the religious leaders that Jesus should treat these despised outcasts of society with friendliness (see on Mark 2:15–17), and that they in turn responded (see COL 186).

2. And the Pharisees and scribes. Literally, “both the Pharisees and the scribes,” here considered as two distinct classes, like the “publicans” and the “sinners” of v. 1. Concerning the scribes and Pharisees see pp. 51, 52, 55. Some of the very critics present upon this occasion later accepted Jesus as their Messiah (COL 192).

Murmured. Gr. *diagogguzō*, an emphatic form of *gogguzō*, also translated “murmured” (see on Luke 5:30; Matt. 20:11). Some were doubtless spies commissioned by the Sanhedrin to follow Jesus wherever He went, to listen and observe, and to report back (see DA 213; see on Luke 11:54). For the motives that led them to complain see COL 186; see on v. 1. It is a paradox that those who considered themselves paragons of righteousness felt so uncomfortable in the presence of Jesus, whereas those who admittedly made no claim to righteousness felt drawn to the Saviour (COL 186). Undoubtedly it was the hypocrisy of the former and the lack of pretense of the latter that made the difference (see Luke 18:9–14). The one class felt no need of the blessings Jesus had to offer, the other class realized its need and made no effort to conceal it (see on Matt. 5:3; Mark 2:5; Luke 4:26; 5:8). The one was content with its own righteousness; the other knew that it had no righteousness of its own to offer. We would do well to ask ourselves how we feel in the presence of Jesus.

This man. Probably an expression used to cast contempt upon Jesus (see on Luke 14:30; cf. Matt. 9:3; 12:24; 26:71; Mark 2:7; Luke 7:39; 14:30; 18:11; 22:56, 59; John 6:52).

Receiveth sinners. The scribes and Pharisees repulsed men whom they considered sinners, but Jesus welcomed them. Upon an earlier occasion Jesus had met this charge with the declaration that He had not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (see on Mark 2:17). It appears that the scribes and Pharisees here insinuated that Jesus chose to associate with such people because their way of life was congenial to Him. Jesus hated sin but loved the sinner, whereas the Pharisees and scribes cherished sin but hated the sinner. Jesus obviously “loved” sinners, and these critics sought to make it appear that He must, accordingly, love the sins that “sinners” committed (see on Luke 15:1). Jesus gave no evidence of feeling socially superior to these outcasts from respectable society. He seemed to prefer to associate with them rather than with the religious leaders. For these “sinners” He had nought but words of encouragement; for the scribes and Pharisees who were self-righteous, He had only words of censure and condemnation (see Luke 14:3–6, 11; see on Mark 3:4; Luke 14:4). For other references to the complaints of Jewish leaders about Jesus’ associating with “publicans” and “sinners” see Luke 7:34, 37.

3. This parable. Another very similar parable (see Matt. 18:12–14) was given by Jesus upon another occasion and for a different purpose. It seems that during His Peraean ministry Jesus paid particular attention to the underprivileged and despised classes of society (see on Luke 14:21), and much of His teaching during this time was either directed to them or given concerning them. The parables of ch. 15 emphasize God’s care

for those whom men often despise, His efforts to win their confidence, and His joy when they respond to His appeals.

It is important to note that the three parables present different aspects of the problem of sin and salvation, and that none is complete in itself. In each parable the lost is found and restored, and thus, in each case, Jesus justifies His attitude toward sinners and His efforts on their behalf. The first two are twin parables, and emphasize the trouble men take to recover lost property and their joy upon meeting with success. The first parable emphasizes the care of the shepherd, and hence the intrinsic value of a soul in the sight of God. The second parable illustrates the latter point in a different way. The third parable illustrates and emphasizes the process by which the lost finds his way back to God. Jesus often answered questionings or criticism by telling parables, as upon this occasion. For Jesus' parable teaching and for principles of interpretation see pp. 203-207.

4. What man of you? In the uplands of Peraea the raising of sheep was a common occupation, and upon this occasion doubtless many in the audience recalled times in which they had gone in search of lost sheep. Most of the parables Jesus told were based upon the personal experience or knowledge of His hearers (see p. 204).

An hundred sheep. In the days of Jesus this would have been considered a large flock.

If he lose one of them. The loss of one might seem a comparatively small matter, but to the owner of the flock the loss of even one occasioned serious concern (cf. John 10:11). The Eastern shepherd commonly knew each sheep personally and cared for it not only as one of the flock but for its own sake. Not only so, but the loss of a single sheep would make an appreciable difference in his income. In the parable the fact that the sheep became lost was evidently due to its own ignorance and folly, and once lost it seemed completely helpless to find its way back. It realized that it was lost, but knew not what to do about it. The one lost sheep represents both the individual sinner and the one world that has been lost (COL 190). This parable teaches that Jesus would have died had there been but one sinner (see on John 3:16), as He did die for the one world that had sinned (see on Luke 15:7).

Wilderness. Gr. *erēmos*, "desert," or "wilderness"; as an adjective *erēmos* means "desolate," "solitary," or "lonely." The emphasis of the word is on an uninhabited region (see on ch. 1:80), hence, usually untilled or untillable land, a "waste." Hence, however, reference is made to the usual pasturelands, the hills, upland valleys, and gullies of Peraea. This "wilderness" was probably not a place of particular danger, and leaving the 99 sheep there does not imply any neglect or carelessness. In the parable as given by Matthew, the shepherd left the sheep, literally, "in the hills" (see on ch. 18:12).

Go after that which is lost. According to the parable, unless the shepherd went after the sheep it would probably remain lost. The shepherd must take the initiative if it is to be restored to the flock and the fold. The effectiveness of salvation does not consist in our seeking for God, but in His search for us. Left to ourselves we might seek for Him throughout eternity without finding Him. Any concept that regards Christianity merely as an attempt on the part of man to find God, misses the point entirely that it is God in search of man (see on John 3:16; cf. Matt. 1:21; 2 Chron. 16:9).

5. On his shoulders. Apparently the shepherd carries his sheep around the back of his neck, bearing its weight on both shoulders (see Isa. 40:11; 49:22; 60:4; 66:12). He does not scold the sheep, he does not drive it back, he does not even lead it back; he carries it.

6. Rejoice with me. The joy of the shepherd was infinitely greater than that of the sheep, grateful though that poor creature might be.

7. Joy shall be in heaven. In their endeavor to avoid pronouncing the sacred name of God, the Jews made use of a number of expressions (see on ch. 12:20), the word “heaven” often being used in this manner. The rabbis taught that the sinner must repent before God is willing to love him or pay any attention to him. Their concept of God was all too frequently what Satan wanted them to think about God. They conceived of Him as One who bestowed His affection and blessings upon those who obeyed Him, and who withheld these from men who did not. In the parable of the Lost Son (vs. 11–32) Jesus endeavors to set forth the true nature of the love of God (see on v. 12). In fact, the entire purpose of Jesus’ mission to earth may be summed up in the statement that He came to reveal the Father (see on Matt. 1:23). Compare the expression, “joy in the presence of the angels” (Luke 15:10).

One sinner that repenteth. Divine love would have led Jesus to make His great sacrifice for even one sinner (COL 187, 196; see on John 3:16). Notice the subtle connection between this “sinner” and the “sinners” of v. 1. We do not repent in order that we may receive God’s love; it was ours “while we were yet sinners” (Rom. 5:8). It is God’s “goodness,” manifested in His love and long-suffering, that leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4; cf. Phil. 2:13).

Just persons. Or, “righteous persons.” The statement is valid as it appears to stand. Be that as it may, it is probably true that Jesus here speaks in irony. The scribes and Pharisees prided themselves on being more righteous than other men (see ch. 18:11, 12), and as Jesus spoke of “just persons” they would naturally consider themselves in that category. They thought that they did not need to repent (see on John 3:4). Here, for point of argument, Jesus takes them at their word, so to speak. Thus, if the Pharisees and scribes *are* righteous, the “sinners” they so piously despise are, by this very fact, proved to be in need of the love and attention Jesus bestows upon them. Thus the critical attitude of the scribes and Pharisees is revealed as unwarranted. For another reply Jesus gave under similar circumstances see Luke 5:31, 32.

8. Either what woman. [*The Lost Coin, Luke 15:8–10. Cf. Matt. 13:44–46. On parables see pp. 203–207.*] For circumstances that prompted this parable and for its relationship to the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Son see on vs. 3, 4. As the former parable was apparently addressed to men in the audience, this was perhaps directed particularly to the women who listened. Jesus often used illustrations that appealed to women in particular (cf. Matt. 13:33; Luke 17:35).

In the case of the lost sheep, the owner was moved both by pity for the sheep and by his own financial interest in the sheep. Here, the element of pity is lacking. The woman had only her own carelessness to blame for the loss of the coin, and her desire to reclaim it was based exclusively on her personal interest in it. The sheep was to blame, in a sense, for straying; the coin could not be blamed for losing itself. This parable emphasizes the intrinsic value of a soul, and the fact that a lost sinner is of so much value in the sight of God that He will “seek diligently” in order to reclaim it.

Pieces of silver. Gr. *drachmai*. In the time of Christ the Greek *drachmē* was .1145 oz. troy, or 3.56 g. of silver, and thus was approximately equivalent in value to the Roman denarius (see p. 49), which was a typical wage for a farm laborer (see on Matt. 20:2).

The number ten is of no particular significance; it appears often as a round number (1 Sam. 1:8; Eccl. 7:19; Isa. 5:10; Amos 6:9; etc.). Jesus employed it in various parables (see Matt. 25:1, 28; Luke 19:13, 16, 17). The ten coins may have been part of the woman's dowry, and thus constituted her savings. Perhaps she had moved them as she cleaned the house, or had been looking at them.

Lose one piece. It was her carelessness that resulted in the loss. The coin did not know that it was lost. Furthermore, it was lost at home, not out in the mountains, like the sheep, nor in a "far country," like the lost son.

A candle. Better, "a lamp." The usual Oriental home often consisted of but one room and had no natural light except that admitted through the door or through small latticed windows. For the purpose of finding such an object, the housewife would almost certainly need an artificial source of light even in the daytime.

Sweep the house. Even today most Oriental houses, particularly in the country districts and in the villages, have only dirt floors. On such a "floor" and in a dark room it would be very easy to lose a coin and difficult to find it again. Diligent search would probably be necessary before the woman could expect to find it.

9. Her friends and her neighbours. According to the Greek, her women friends and neighbors.

Rejoice with me. Joy that is shared with others is intensified in the heart of the person who shares it. Whoever has had the experience of finding again some article of value he feared irretrievably lost can understand the joy of this woman (cf. Rom. 12:15). But of all the joys earth has to offer, there is no joy like that of finding a lost sinner and bringing him to Jesus.

10. There is joy. See on v. 7.

11. A certain man. [*The Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11–32.* On parables see pp. 203–207.] For the circumstances under which this parable was spoken and for its relationship to the two preceding parables see on vs. 3, 4, 8. Though Inspiration has not indicated precisely when and where this parable was spoken, it is reasonable to think that it was given either at the same time as the two that precede it, or very shortly after.

This, perhaps the most famous of all the parables of Jesus, consists of two parts. The first part (vs. 11–24) emphasizes the emotions of the father of the lost son, his love for the boy, and his joy when the prodigal returned. The second part (vs. 25–32) is a rebuke to those who, like the elder son, resented the father's love and joy. This latter section was probably Christ's answer to the murmuring of the scribes and Pharisees (see v. 2).

Whereas the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin stress God's part in the work of redemption, the parable of the Lost Son emphasizes man's part in responding to the love of God and acting in harmony with it. The Jews had completely misconstrued the nature of divine love (see on v. 7). In the parable the younger son represents the publicans and the sinners, the older son, the scribes and the Pharisees.

12. The younger. Evidently weary of restraint and probably feeling that his liberty was unduly restricted by a father who had only his own selfish interests at heart, this youth desired above all else to have his own way. He knew very well what he wanted, or at least thought he knew. That he did not, is apparent from the fact that "when he came to himself" (v. 17) his course of action changed completely. But now he understood neither himself nor his father. Most unfortunate of all, he did not understand or appreciate the

fact that his father loved him and that all his father's decisions and requirements were based on what was, in the end, best for the sons.

The narrative makes it clear that the father was a wise and understanding person, that he was both just and merciful, and that he was eminently reasonable. On the other hand, the inexperienced youth seemed to consider it his unquestioned right to take full advantage of all the privileges of sonship without bearing any of its responsibilities. After thinking things over he decided that the only course of action that would solve the problem in the way he thought it ought to be solved was to leave home and set out on his own, to live his life as he pleased. His chosen course of action began with a direct violation of the fifth commandment. For a consideration of the factors that enter into the responsibilities of children to parents and of parents to children see on ch. 2:52.

Portion of goods. That is, his share of the property. Jewish literature of the time discloses that it was not unusual for a father actually to make a division of his inheritance among his sons while he was yet alive rather than let such provisions as he might wish to make take effect upon his death. But the father was by no means obliged to do so. The youth's demand was, therefore, highly improper. It seems quite evident that it meant nonconfidence on the part of the son toward the father and a complete and final rejection of the father's authority.

That falleth to me. That is, the share that properly belongs to me. This expression is commonly used in the Greek papyri to refer to a privilege to which one may be entitled or to an obligation he is bound to meet.

He divided. The father, legitimately and properly, might have refused to accede to his son's unreasonable demand, yet he granted it. The fact that he did so speaks well of his judgment as a parent and provides a clue to the fact that the son's perverse choice was undoubtedly not due to an unwise attitude on the father's part. There are times when it seems that the best thing a parent can do is to permit a headstrong youth to have his way in order that he may discover from experience the results of his choice.

According to the Mosaic law, the eldest son was to receive a double portion of his father's estate, and the younger sons were to receive a single portion each (see on Deut. 21:17). The extra portion granted the eldest son was designed to provide him with the necessary resources for discharging his responsibilities as head of the household. If a father had only two sons, as was the case here (see v. 11), the younger son would receive one third of his father's estate. Ordinarily, however, when a division of property was made during the father's lifetime, the property remained intact until the father's death. The younger son of the parable, however, demanded not only a division of the estate but actual possession of his share of it. From the record of the narrative (see v. 13) it seems likely that he converted his share of the property entirely into cash or other easily carried valuables.

13. Younger son. In his departure from the parental roof the younger son represents the publicans and the sinners (v. 1), who have severed connections with their heavenly Father and make no profession of allegiance to Him.

A far country. He was not content to settle down near home, where he would be reminded from time to time of his father and his father's counsel. He sought to be free from all the restraints of home. Undoubtedly he wanted to forget. The "far country" thus represents a "far" removed condition of forgetfulness of God.

Wasted his substance. That is, he scattered his property in a wasteful manner. Thus he rapidly spent the treasures he had assiduously “gathered” together (see on v. 12). Apparently his conscience was asleep, and in the “far country” of forgetfulness of his father’s counsel and guidance there was nothing to prevent him from doing precisely as he pleased. According to his own conception of life, he was now living it to the full.

With riotous living. Literally, “in living riotously.” The Gr. *asōtōs*, “wastefully,” “dissolutely,” or “profligately,” is an adverb derived from *a*, a negative prefix, and *soō* or *sōzō*, “to save.” The “living” of the young man may have been recklessly wasteful, or morally dissolute, or both. The elder son of the parable emphasized the second of these two possible shades of meaning in respect to his younger brother’s “living” (see v. 30). However, this latter way of life generally includes the first also. The way the youth disposed of his financial resources, which appear to have been considerable, reveals his concept of life. According to his way of looking at things, a man comes into this world for the purpose of getting all he can out of it, without contributing anything in return.

14. When he had spent all. To begin with, his fortune appeared of such proportions that apparently he could draw on it indefinitely without replenishing it. Now, suddenly and unexpectedly, it disappeared. To make matters worse than they would otherwise have been, a severe famine arose in the land. Had he been diligent in adding to his resources and frugal in his expenditures, the famine probably would have brought no extreme hardship. But quite evidently he had not anticipated poverty coupled with famine.

He began to be in want. In time of storm the prodigal’s fair-weather friends vanished. They were without doubt much like him, living for self-gratification. But the young man was a stranger, a newcomer, and in times of stress such as these every man no doubt found it more than he could do to supply his own needs. The young man’s improvident spending (see on v. 13) had not gained him even one friend on whom he could rely for help in his time of need.

15. Joined himself. Gr. *kollaō*, “to glue together,” hence “to join,” or “to cleave to.” The prodigal practically sold himself to a man who had little to offer him.

To a citizen. Literally, “to one of the citizens.” This being “a far country,” the “citizen” of that country was probably a Gentile and a heathen.

His fields. The “citizen” was evidently a man of some property.

To feed swine. To a Jew, for whom the swine were unclean, there could scarcely be a more degrading form of employment. In this respect the young man could sink no lower. Possibly he was not qualified for any higher type of employment. Apparently, at home he had not spent his time profitably in acquiring useful skills, and his “riotous living” (v. 13) now left him a derelict of society.

16. He would fain. Literally, “he was desiring [or craving].”

Filled his belly. Apparently he could not earn even enough to eat, and found himself reduced to the place where what the swine ate seemed desirable to him also. Thus, for the moment, his ambitions in life were no higher than those of the swine. In fact, his ambitions had been no higher during his riotous days, but he did not become aware of the fact until he was reduced to actual hunger.

Husks. Gr. *keratia*, “little horns,” a diminutive form of *keras*, “a horn.” *Keratia* is used to describe the pods of the *keratea*, the carob, or locust, tree, because of the hornlike

shape of the pods. The pod of this tree has also been called St.-John's-bread, on the tradition that this was part of the diet of John the Baptist (see Additional Note on Matt. 3). After the removal of the seeds for human consumption, the pods themselves were commonly used as fodder for domestic animals—as contemporary Jewish literature often observed. The carob tree is still cultivated in Palestine, and has been introduced into the United States.

17. Came to himself. Some people seem to float along on the tide of life without a serious thought until death stares them in the face. For all practical purposes the youth had been out of his head, but the dire need in which he now found himself forced him to come to his senses. Those who live, or rather exist, exclusively on merely the physical level lack the capacity to understand the lessons of life except when these come to them in terms of physical need, desire, or pain. This young man had, as it were, been “away” from himself, but now came back again. He found himself—a new experience, apparently—and began to realize how foolish he had been.

How many hired servants. Note that they were “hired servants,” not “slaves.” Probably the young man had once despised, and possibly even mistreated, his father's hired servants. Now the lot in life of a “hired servant” in his father's house appeared highly desirable in his eyes. For all practical purposes he was a “slave,” and starving at that. His boasted liberty had proved to be, in reality, the worst kind of slavery—which it had been all along, though he did not realize the fact. So this was the climax of a life patterned according to his own philosophy of things! His condition was the result of his own folly. The wisdom of his father's philosophy of life now began to take on meaning for him.

18. I will arise. Perhaps as much morally as physically. He arose from the lethargy and despair that had spread over the skies of his life with the ominous threat of disaster and desolation. As yet he had no concept of the nature of his father's love. But a sense of his father's justice gave birth to the desperate hope that his father would treat him as he treated his hired help.

I have sinned. It seems not to have entered his thoughts to contrive some excuse for his course of action, much less to blame his father for it. His present state testified to the fact that his father had been right all along, and that he had been in the wrong. His confession was to be honest and unqualified.

Against heaven. The religious instruction he had received in his father's home had not been entirely forgotten. He realized that any wrong act toward his fellow men was construed in heaven as if it had been done to God (see Gen. 39:9). All along he had been openly violating the principles of the fifth commandment, if not the others as well.

19. No more worthy. He had no worthiness of his own to offer as a reason for being given a job on the family estate. He could not pretend that there was, for it was altogether too obvious that he had no claim of any kind on his father.

As one of thy hired servants. He would apply for a job as a favor, not as a right. He had no rights. Formerly he had not been willing to submit to paternal discipline as a son; now he was ready to submit to the discipline that his father, as master of the estate, administered to his servants. He had, for all practical purposes, disowned his father, and in strict justice his father might be expected to disown him as a son. But perhaps he would accept him as a servant.

20. He arose, and came. Apparently the prodigal acted without delay. No sooner had he made his decision than he carried it out. In the parable it is the son who takes the initiative in returning to the father. It appears to be the son's choice rather than the father's love that effects reconciliation. From this some have drawn the unwarranted conclusion that Jesus here teaches that the first step in reconciliation is that the individual must return to God of his own volition—that it is not the love of God that first draws him. Such a conclusion, however, violates more than one fundamental principle of the interpretation of Christ's parables (see pp. 203-207). Furthermore, in the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin, Jesus has clearly set forth the truth here called into question, that the initiative in effecting salvation and reconciliation is of God. Also, no parable based on ordinary human relationships can perfectly reflect all aspects of the love and mercy of God. God's gift of His Son to the world was before men's belief in that Gift (John 3:16), and the Scriptures specifically teach that even the desire to do right is implanted in the human heart by God (see Phil. 2:13).

His father saw him. Jesus implies that the father was looking for his son to return, even expecting him. The father seems to have known the boy's character and disposition well enough to realize—even when bestowing upon the youth his share of the family fortune and when bidding him farewell—that he lacked those essential traits of character that would enable him to make a success of his venture. Apparently he reasoned that sooner or later the boy would come to himself (see on v. 17). He recognized his son, even in his tattered garments, and at a distance. In vs. 20–24 Jesus unfolds to His hearers the character of the father, even as in vs. 11–19 He dwells upon that of the younger son.

Ran. He might have waited for the boy to come up to where he stood. Instead, he made evident the eagerness and joy of his own heart by going forth to meet him.

Fell on his neck. That is, in an embrace. The son had not yet spoken, but his return in so sorry a state spoke more eloquently than any words he may have contrived to say. Nor is there any record of what the father may have said to his son, but his orders to the servants, together with his own manifestation of fatherly love, were likewise more eloquent than words could possibly have been.

21. I have sinned. See on v. 18.

Called thy son. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for adding “treat me as one of your hired servants.” The father had other plans for him—as a son and not as a servant.

22. Bring forth. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading “bring forth quickly.”

Robe. Gr. *stolē*, a loose outer garment for men, which extended to the feet; usually worn by persons of rank. From the very first the father received him as a son and not as a servant. To begin with, the father had cast his own mantle about the youth, for the purpose of hiding his rags (see COL 203, 204) and sparing him the embarrassment of being seen in his tattered garments even by the servants of the household. It is unlikely that the servants accompanied their master as he ran forth to greet his son, and therefore the command to “bring forth the best robe” was given as father and son approached the house.

A ring. Another token that the father still owned him as a son. This was probably a signet ring (see on Esther 3:10; 8:2), and if so, the placing of it on his finger indicated

even more clearly his restored status as a member of the family. No doubt the young man had long since sold or pawned the signet ring he formerly wore.

Shoes. Literally, “sandals” (see on Matt. 3:11). Servants commonly went barefoot. “Shoes” were a further indication that the father received the repentant prodigal as a son and not as a servant. The best robe, the ring, and the shoes were not necessities, but special tokens of favor. The father not only provided for the needs of his son, but honored him, and in so doing gave evidence of the love and joy that filled his own heart. By the use of this parable Jesus justifies the welcome He accorded the sinners who pressed about Him (see on v. 1) and reproved the scribes and Pharisees for their critical attitude toward Him for doing so (see on v. 2).

24. My son was dead. That is, “dead” for all the father knew, literally and figuratively so because of the nature of their separation from each other. For the figurative use of the word “dead” see on ch. 9:60.

Began to be merry. The young man found himself, not a servant as he had hoped, but an honored guest at a banquet held to celebrate his return. An Oriental banquet commonly lasts for a number of hours.

25. His elder son. In the parable nothing more is said directly concerning the younger son. His restoration is now complete, and the lesson of the parable in so far as he is concerned—the gracious welcome Heaven accords the returning and repentant sinner—is clear. Thus far Jesus has justified His friendly attitude toward “publicans and sinners” (see on v. 2). The remainder of the parable (vs. 25–32) deals with the attitude of the Pharisees and scribes toward “sinners” (see on v. 2), as represented by the attitude of the elder brother toward the younger. This part of the parable was set forth as a rebuke to these self-righteous hypocrites for their “murmuring” at the way Jesus treated the outcasts of society (v. 2).

In the field. He was at work, as a dutiful son should be (see Matt. 21:28–31). Similarly, the scribes and Pharisees were hard at work in the hope of earning the inheritance the heavenly Father bestows upon faithful sons. But they were serving God, not from love (see on Matt. 22:37), but from a sense of duty and of earning righteousness by works. This same attitude had been true of their fathers in the days of Isaiah (see Isa. 1:11–15) and of Malachi (see Mal. 1:12–14). In place of true obedience they offered God the counterfeit of meticulous adherence to the traditions of men (see on Mark 7:6–13), blissfully ignoring the words of Samuel that “to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam. 15:22; cf. on Matt. 7:21–27).

Musick. Gr. *sumphōnia*, literally, “unison of sound,” from which comes our English word “symphony.” *Sumphōnia* may designate either a number of instruments or voices in unison or an instrument or voices in unison or an instrument resembling bagpipes (see on Dan. 3:5). The feast was probably provided with paid entertainers. Evidently the father spared no efforts to make the return of his long-lost son the occasion for a grand celebration, news of which would certify to all in the town the restored status of the son.

28. He was angry. As were the scribes and Pharisees toward Jesus (v. 2). The anger of the son stands forth in supreme contrast with the utter joy of the father (see on vs. 20, 22).

Would not go in. According to the Greek, he persistently refused to do so even after repeated urging by his father in person.

29. I serve thee. The trouble was that the older brother labored in the mood of a servant, rather than as a son. He claimed his father's property by right, because he had earned it, and felt angry (v. 28) toward his father for not recognizing what he considered his rights as the elder son.

Neither transgressed. He rigorously observed all the outward requirements made of dutiful sons, but knew nothing of the true spirit of obedience. His service was nothing more than servile compliance with the forms of filial piety.

Thou never gavest me a kid. The Greek stresses "me" as though he said, "You never gave a kid to me." Whether the older brother realized it or not, he was jealous of the attention being shown his brother, and probably felt that all this attention should have been his instead. He complained about never having been rewarded with so much as a "kid," to say nothing of a "fatted calf." No doubt there also lurked in his heart the fear that the reinstatement of his younger brother might also mean that the father would bestow a portion of the estate—which was now legally the property of the older son (see on v. 12)—upon this wastrel brother. Perhaps the older brother here implied that even the fatted calf was legally his, and that his father had no right to use it or any other part of the property without his personal consent.

Make merry with my friends. Here he seems to imply, further, that his lot in life had been a gloomy one and that he had more or less envied his brother the riotous time he had enjoyed. He had not been "merry" in serving his father; in fact, apparently he did not enjoy his father's company, but preferred that of his "friends."

30. This thy son. An expression revealing contempt and sarcasm (see on chs. 14:30; 15:2). The older son disdains to own the younger son as his brother. Coldly he taunts his father by referring to his brother as "thy son." Perhaps at heart he feels himself to be more righteous than either his father or his brother.

Hath devoured thy living. See v. 12.

With harlots. Whether the older brother knew this to be a fact concerning his younger brother or merely surmised that this had been the case is not stated.

31. Son. Gr. *teknon*, "a child," or "a son." Here the father does not use the usual word for "son," *huios*, but addresses the older brother with the more affectionate term, *teknon*. It is as if he had said, "my dear boy."

Thou art ever with me. The younger son had not been "ever" with him, and herein lay the difference for the immediate celebration. Compare the rejoicing of the shepherd over the one lost sheep as compared with that which he feels for the ones that had not strayed from the fold (see on vs. 4, 7). However, the father goes on to point out his equal love for the older son, even if there had been no occasion for showing it by means of a celebration.

All that I have is thine. At the time the father had "divided" his "living" and assigned to the younger son his portion, he had also turned over to the older son the double portion that fell to him by birthright (see on v. 12). The contention that the father had been stingy (v. 29) is proved false. The property was now the elder son's, and he might have "made merry" with his friends had he chosen to do so. The father herein also assures him that his rights will in no way be impaired by the return of his brother. If it is this that troubles him, he may put away his fears and join in the celebration. One by one the father proves all the arguments advanced by the older son invalid and invites him to join in welcoming his brother (see on v. 28).

32. *It was meet.* True, the younger son did not deserve the reception he had received, yet the father protests that it is fitting and proper to give boy a joyous welcome. The feast is not being given on the basis of merit; it is simply an expression of the father's joy, and in this joy it was also "meet" that the older brother should participate. This, Jesus says, should be the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees toward sinners. The father's affection for his long-lost younger son in no way diminished his love for the older son. His love included both of them in spite of their obvious failings. Fortunately the love of our heavenly Father is not based on how deserving we may be of it.

This thy brother. In answer to the expression of contempt used by the older brother, "this thy son" (v. 30), the father uses an expression of tender entreaty, "thy brother." In the pleading of the father with the older boy, Jesus represents His own pleading with the scribes and the Pharisees. He loves them fully as well as He does the "publicans and sinners" (vs. 1, 2). They need not take offense at His attitude toward these unfortunate outcasts of society. They need not fear for their own rights and privileges. But it is "meet" that they should change their attitude toward God and their fellow men. Compare the parable of the Good Samaritan (ch. 10:25–37) and the experience of the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16–22).

No hint is given as to whether the elder son amended his ways, or whether the younger son henceforth conducted himself honorably. Neither point was relevant to the lessons Jesus intended the parable to teach. In fact, the parable was still being enacted and the outcome rested on the hearers (see COL 209).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 COL 185, 186

1–72T 21

1–10COL 185–197

2 COL 189; GW 170

4 COL 187; GW 181; 2T 21

4, 5 Ev 16

4–6CT 198; FE 273; 2T 218; 6T 124

4–73T 99; 5T 604

4–104T 264; 7T 241

5–72T 22

6, 7 COL 189; GW 182; 6T 125

7 AA 154; COL 47, 237; FE 274; LS 188, 363; ML 122, 238, 307; TM 153; 2T 219; 3T 381; 5T 629; 6T 462; 8T 73

8 COL 192; 3T 99

8–10MH 163; 5T 604

9, 10 COL 193; 3T 100

10 CS 348; FE 210; MH 494; MYP 23; 7T 265; WM 93

11–13COL 198

11–24Ev 56

11–32COL 198–211; MYP 408

12 3T 100

13–203T 101

17–19COL 202

18, 19 SC 53

19, 20 5T 632
20 COL 203; MYP 97; SC 54
20–243T 102
21 TM 153
21–23COL 204
24 DA 496
24–3COL 207
25–323T 103
30, 31 COL 208, 209
32 COL 209, 211; DA 495

CHAPTER 16

4

1 *The parable of the unjust steward.* 14 *Christ reproveth the hypocrisy of the covetous Pharisees.* 19 *The rich glutton, and Lazarus the beggar.*

1. He said also. [*The Dishonest Steward*, Luke 16:1–18 On parables see pp. 203–207.] No specific information is given concerning the time, place, or circumstances under which the parables and instruction of ch. 16 were given. The opening words of the chapter, however, strongly imply that it was soon after the events of ch. 15, possibly upon the same occasion. It was but a few months before the close of Christ’s ministry, probably about January or February, A.D. 31, and the place, Peraea, the region beyond Jordan (see on ch. 15:1).

Unto his disciples. As was so often the case (see on Matt. 5:1, 2, Jesus first addressed His teaching to the disciples even though others might be present. As in Luke 15 (see v. 2) there were Pharisees present upon this occasion ch. 16:14), and eventually Jesus spoke directly to them (v. 15; see on v. 9). Publicans were also in the circle of listeners, and the parable had special meaning for them. Many of them were no doubt “rich.”

A certain rich man. Only Luke records this parable, as is true of much of the record of the Peraean ministry (see on Matt. 19:1, 2; Luke 9:51). This parable and the one that follows, the Rich Man and Lazarus, are both concerned with the use of present opportunities with a view to the future life (Luke 16:25–31), particularly with the use of the material things of this life. The first parable of this chapter was specifically addressed to the disciples, whereas the second one was spoken chiefly for the benefit of the Pharisees. The first illustrates a principle vital to wise stewardship—the discreet and diligent use of present opportunities. The second approaches the problem of stewardship from the negative point of view, as do the parables of the Friend Calling at Midnight (ch. 11:5–10) and the Unjust Judge (ch. 18:1–8).

In the first parable Jesus calls upon men to turn their thoughts from the things of time to those of eternity (COL 366). Among the publicans there had been a case similar to this not long before (COL 368), and the publicans in the audience would likely be particularly impressed as they listened to Jesus’ narration of the story.

Commentators generally find this parable difficult to explain, especially because of the seeming commendation accorded the dishonest steward of the story (see v. 8). These

⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Lk 11:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

difficulties are due to the attempt to assign a meaning to every detail of the parable, such as the suggestion that the “rich man” represents God. But this parable is not to be interpreted allegorically. It is a fundamental principle in the interpretation of parables that no attempt should be made to read some special meaning into every detail. For principles of interpretation see pp. 203, 204. Jesus designed this parable to illustrate one specific truth, the one He points out in vs. 8–14.

A steward. A manager of the affairs of a household or of an estate. As the context makes plain, this “steward” was a freeman rather than an overslave, such as some “stewards” were. Had he been a slave his prospect would have been slavery under some other owner, and thus he would have had no concern about earning a living after being relieved of his stewardship; furthermore, if a slave, he would not have been free to carry out the plan he proposed to himself (v. 4).

Had wasted. According to the Greek, the steward was still wasting his master’s goods. In fact, he was accused of systematically robbing his master (see COL 366, 367), and the charges seemed sufficiently well substantiated to lead to his dismissal even before he had opportunity to give an account of his stewardship (v. 2). The “waste” may have been due in part to incompetence or to neglect, though the steward’s shrewdness (vs. 4–8) implies that he was clever enough when it came to looking after his own interests.

2. How is it? This clause may also be translated, “What is this that I hear of thee?” or “Why is this that I hear of thee?”

Give an account. He was to balance his accounts and hand the records over to his master, who would examine them to determine whether the charges against his steward were justified.

3. Said within himself. As the steward balanced his accounts preparatory to giving them to his master, he thought matters over.

I cannot. Or, “I am not able,” or “I am not strong enough.”

I am resolved. Apparently the steward was guilty and knew that he could not clear himself. Had his stewardship been characterized by integrity it is not likely that he would at this time have resorted to the very type of shrewd dealing of which he had been accused. He had, apparently, been living by his wits and now proposed an even more clever scheme that would still make possible an easy living for himself. While the steward was yet in a position to do so, he would use his present position of authority as a means of providing for the uncertain future.

When I am put out. Rather, “whenever I may be put out.”

They. The steward has in mind his “lord’s debtors” (v. 5). He would place them under personal obligation to him.

5. Called every one. Or, “summoning his master’s debtors one by one” (RSV). The steward carried out his scheme systematically and diligently. Had he used the same diligence and skill in furthering his master’s interests that he used in furthering his own he would have been a success rather than a failure. As a servant in the house of Potiphar, Joseph exhibited those traits of character that endeared him to his master (see Gen. 39:1–6). By promoting his master’s interests as if they were his own, Joseph found himself promoted to be steward over Potiphar’s household.

How much owest thou? It would almost seem that because of incompetence or neglect the steward had either incomplete records or no records at all of previous

transactions. If so, he could connive easily with those who purchased his master's goods to defraud the master and to benefit both himself and the purchasers at the master's expense.

6. Measures. Gr. *batoi*, from the Heb. *bath*, but of different capacity equal to about 10.4 gal., or 39.4 l. (see p. 50). One hundred "measures" would thus be about 1,040 gal. (39.4 hl.), a rather large debt.

Oil. Doubtless olive oil, the common oil of Palestine and the surrounding lands.

Bill. Literally, "writings," or "documents," here meaning the "contracts," or "notes," of the original transaction.

Quickly. There were apparently many who had done business with the steward, and if his scheme was to succeed, he must carry it through without delay.

7. Measures. Gr. *koroi*, from Heb. *kor*, but of different volume equivalent to about 14.92 bu., or 525 l. (see p. 50). One hundred "measures" would thus be about 1,492 bu., or 525 hl., another large debt.

8. The lord commended. These words are not the editorial comment of Luke, as some have thought, but were part of Jesus' parable. The speaker of these words of commendation is thus the "rich man" of v. 1. It is utterly inconceivable that Jesus would have given an unqualified commendation to the dishonest steward's scheme to defraud his master (see COL 367). Jesus' evaluation of this steward is revealed in the words, "the unjust steward." However, as this commendation constitutes the climax of the parable, it is apparent that Jesus found in the rich man's commendation of his steward something useful in teaching a lesson to the disciples and to the listening audience. The narrative itself makes plain what this was. The rich man did not condone his steward's dishonesty; it was for dishonesty that he was being relieved of his duties. But the cleverness with which this scheming rascal brought his career of misconduct to a climax was so amazing, and the thoroughness with which he carried out his plan so worthy of more noble objectives, that the rich man could not help admiring his steward's sharpness and diligence.

Done wisely. That is, from the viewpoint of self-interest, by making for himself a host of friends who would be obligated to him in days to come. The word "wisely" is from the Gr. *phronimōs*, which, like its adjectival form *phronimos* (see Matt. 7:24; 10:16), is from *phrēn*, "mind." As we would say, the steward had "used his head." He had exercised foresight by planning cleverly and shrewdly for his own future. His "wisdom," or "sharpness," consisted essentially in the assiduous use he made of present opportunities while they lasted. Had the steward been as dilatory in making a final settlement with his master's debtors as he had been in conducting business previously, he would not have succeeded with his nefarious scheme.

Children of this world. Literally, "children of this age," considering the world from the viewpoint of time and events. Those who live for this world are referred to here in contrast with those who live for the next world, "the children of light."

Their generation. That is, in the present age, the only "age" in which they are interested and for which they live (see on Matt. 23:36).

Wiser than. Men who live exclusively for this life often show more earnestness in their pursuit of what it has to offer than Christians do in their preparation for what God offers those who choose His service. It is a human weakness to give more thought to how

we may serve ourselves than we do to how we can serve God and one another (see COL 370). The Christian does well to be characterized by “zeal,” but his zeal should be “according to knowledge” (Rom. 10:2). He must have a true sense of values in order to be so distinguished (see on Matt. 6:24–34).

Children of light. Compare John 12:36; Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5. Jesus also used such expressions as “children of God” (Matt. 5:9; Luke 20:36; John 11:52), “children of the kingdom” (Matt. 8:12; 13:38), “children of your Father” (Matt. 5:45), to refer to those who accepted His teachings and made the kingdom of heaven first in their lives (see on Matt. 6:33).

9. Make to yourselves friends. Here Jesus turns to the Pharisees (see COL 369), who were present (see v. 14) and who, as leaders of the Jewish nation, were in a special sense stewards of the truth and blessings God had bestowed upon His chosen people (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–28). As stewards of Heaven, the leaders of Israel had been wasting the “goods” Heaven had entrusted to them, and it would not be long before they would be called upon to “give an account” of their stewardship.

Jesus does not imply that heaven is to be purchased. The truth to which He does direct attention is that we should make use of present opportunities with a view to our eternal welfare. We are but stewards of the material possessions that come to our hands in this life, and God has entrusted them to us that we may learn the principles of faithful stewardship. All that we have in this present life is actually “another man’s,” that is, God’s; it is not our “own” (Luke 16:12; see 1 Cor. 6:19). We are to use the material things entrusted to us to advance the interests of our Father in heaven, by applying them to the needs of our fellow men (see Prov. 19:17; Matt. 19:21; 25:31–46; Luke 12:33) and to the advancement of the gospel (see 1 Cor. 9:13; 2 Cor. 9:6, 7).

Mammon of unrighteousness. See on Matt. 6:24. This expression indicates a degree of contempt for “riches,” much as we speak of “money” as “filthy lucre.” To make friends “of” mammon means to make friends “by means of” it.

When ye fail. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “when it fails.” The rendering “when ye fail” would mean “when ye die.” But the Scriptures do not teach that men are received “into everlasting habitations” at death, as this rendering would require, but at our Lord’s return (see John 14:3). “When it fails” means “when riches [the mammon of unrighteousness] fail.” When the steward’s source of income failed (Luke 16:3), then it was that he gave thought to the future (v. 4). The point of the parable is not the steward’s failure in his stewardship, or his death, but his method of solving the problem of loss of personal income. Thus the context, as well as the general tenor of Scripture, requires the reading “when it fails.” The antecedent of “it” is “mammon,” and the antecedent of “they” is “friends.”

10. That which is least. Here it is implied that mammon (or, riches) is “least,” or “little.” Again it should be pointed out that Jesus did not commend the dishonesty of the steward (see on v. 8). Lest the disciples, or others in the audience, should seize upon this parable as providing, in any measure, an excuse for dishonesty, Jesus here clearly states the profound truth that all who would be His disciples must be characterized by scrupulous integrity and diligence. According to the Midrash (*Rabbah*, on Ex. 3:1, Soncino ed., p. 49), God does not give a big thing to a man until He has tested him in a small matter; afterward He promotes him to a great thing. The Midrash then gives as an

example the supposed words of God to David: “Thou hast been found trustworthy with thy sheep; come, therefore, and tend my sheep.”

Faithful also in much. He will be promoted (see on Matt. 25:21).

11. The true riches. That is, spiritual “riches” (see James 2:5). Compare Christ’s admonition not to work for “the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life” (John 6:27). A little earlier in His Peraean ministry Jesus warned men against laying up treasure for themselves instead of being “rich toward God” (Luke 12:21).

12. Another man’s. One of the most important things for a man to learn in this life is that all the money and material things that come into his possession are not his by virtue of his own wisdom and skill, but are on loan from God. The Lord solemnly warned Israel against this fatal deception and reminded them that it is God who gives men “power to get wealth” (see on Deut. 8:18).

Failure to profit by the instruction given them on this principle was, in large measure, responsible for Israel’s failure as a nation (see Vol. IV, pp. 32, 33). It is ever true that when men do not honor God and appreciate the good things of life as coming from His beneficent hand, they become “vain in their imaginations” and “their foolish heart” is “darkened” (Rom. 1:21). We are simply stewards of God.

That which is your own. Here Jesus refers to eternal life and the blessings and joys that accompany it, as our own. We are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). When Christ is enthroned in glory He will extend to all the faithful the gracious invitation to come and “inherit the kingdom prepared for” them “from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34).

13. No servant. See on Matt. 6:24. Except for the word “servant”—a word suitable to this context, which deals with the “servant” of the parable, the steward—Jesus’ statement as here given is identical with that of Matt. 6:24. It should be remembered that much of Jesus’ former teaching was repeated during the Peraean phase of His ministry (DA 488). There is no valid reason for supposing, as many critics do, that either Luke or Matthew must have inserted this saying at the wrong place in his gospel narrative.

14. The Pharisees. See pp. 51, 52.

Covetous. Gr. *philarguroi*, literally, “money lovers.” The word occurs in the NT only here and in 2 Tim. 3:2. Some critical commentators have suggested that it was the Sadducees, not the Pharisees, as Luke has it, that are here described, on the basis that the former constituted the wealthiest class of Jewish society. But Jesus is not discussing the possession of riches in and of themselves. It is not the possession of wealth that bars a man from heaven, but rather his inordinate love and misuse of wealth. There is nothing to prevent a relatively “poor” man from being covetous. Elsewhere Jesus plainly charges the Pharisees with being covetous (see on Matt. 23:14). According to the philosophy of life of the Pharisees, wealth constituted an evidence of divine blessing. In comparison, Jesus not only had no possessions (see on Matt. 8:20), but did not even desire any (see on Matt. 6:24–34). In this as in other respects His principles and those of the Pharisees were utterly irreconcilable.

Heard all these things. What follows (vs. 14–31) is quite evidently a continuation of a report of the same occasion as that represented by vs. 1–13.

Derided him. Or, “sneered at Him.” No doubt the Pharisees realized that Jesus had been directing His remarks at them (see vs. 9–13; see on v. 9). It seems that the present

narrative sequence, beginning with ch. 15:1, is the record of Jesus' teachings upon a single occasion (see on chs. 15:1; 16:1, 14). If so, the Pharisees had been present from the beginning (see ch. 15:2), and the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son had all been addressed to them by Jesus to justify His interest in "publicans and sinners" (see ch. 15:1–3).

15. Justify yourselves. Compare "a certain lawyer" who sought "to justify himself" with the question, "Who is my neighbour?" (ch. 10:25–29). The Pharisees had met with success in persuading men of the validity of their theory that wealth is a reward for righteousness. They had ably defended their case, and at least those who had a measure of this world's goods found satisfaction in such a theory.

God knoweth your hearts. See 1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Chron. 28:9. The trouble with the Pharisees was that they were hypocrites (see on Matt. 6:2; 7:5); their "righteousness" were nothing more than whitewash (see Isa. 64:6; Matt. 23:13–33).

Abomination. Gr. *bdelugma*, "a putrid thing," "a detestable thing." Compare the use of *bdelugma* in Rev. 17:4, 5; 21:27.

16. The law and the prophets. That is, the canonical writings of the OT (see Matt. 5:17; 7:12; 22:40; Luke 24:27, 44; Acts 13:15; 28:23; see on Luke 24:44).

Until John. That is, John the Baptist. "Until" the preaching of the "kingdom of God" by John, the sacred writings of the OT constituted man's primary guide to salvation (see Rom. 3:1, 2). The word "until" (Gr. *mechri*) in no way implies—as some superficial exponents of Scripture would have us believe—that "the law and the prophets," the OT Scriptures, in any way lost their value or force when John began to preach. What Jesus here means is that until the ministry of John "the law and the prophets" were all that men had. The gospel came, not to replace or annul what Moses and the prophets had written, but rather to supplement, to reinforce, to confirm those writings (see on Matt. 5:17–19). The gospel does not stand in place of the OT, but in addition to it. This is clearly the sense in which *mechri* (also translated "to") is used in such passages of Scripture as Matt. 28:15 and Rom. 5:14.

Throughout the NT there is no instance in which the OT is in any way belittled. On the contrary, it was in the OT Scriptures that NT believers found the strongest confirmation of their faith; in fact, the OT was the only Bible that the first-generation NT church possessed (see on John 5:39). They did not despise it, as do some today who call themselves Christians, but honored and cherished it. In fact, upon this very occasion Jesus set forth the writings of the OT as sufficient to guide men to heaven (see Luke 16:29–31). Those who teach that the OT Scriptures are without value or authority for the Christian, teach contrary to what Christ taught. Paul affirmed that his teachings included "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22). In his teaching Paul referred constantly to "the law of Moses" and to "the prophets" (see Acts 28:23).

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus made it clear that His teachings in no way set aside those of the OT. He emphatically declared that He did not come to take from the OT Scriptures the least "jot" or "tittle" (see on Matt. 5:18). When He declared, "but I say unto you" (see on v. 22), the contrast He drew between the teachings of the OT and His teachings was not intended to diminish the value or importance of the former, but rather

to free them from the narrow concepts of the Jews of His day and to amplify and strengthen them.

Since that time. Since the proclamation of the kingdom of God by John the Baptist, additional light had been shining upon the pathway of salvation, and the Pharisees had no excuse whatever for being “covetous” (see v. 14). There had been sufficient light for them in the OT (see vs. 29–31), but they had rejected that light (see John 5:45–47); now they took the same attitude toward the increased light shining forth through the life and teachings of Jesus (see John 1:4; 14:6).

Every man. Probably Jesus is here referring to the vast throngs that followed Him wherever He went in Peraea (see on chs. 12:1; 14:25; 15:1). There was tremendous, though sometimes misguided, interest in Him personally and in His miracles and teachings.

Presseth. Gr. *biazō*, “to use force,” or “to apply force.” See on Matt. 11:12, 13 for a discussion of the meaning of Luke 16:16.

17. It is easier. For comment on v. 17 see on Matt. 5:18.

Tittle. Gr. *keraiā*, “a little horn,” “an apex,” or “a point,” from *keras*, “a horn.” See on Matt. 5:18. As an illustration of the meaning of *keraiā*, the part of the English letter “G” that distinguishes it from the letter “C” might be referred to as a “tittle.”

The law. By “the law” Jewish usage meant all the revealed will of God, particularly the writings of Moses (see on Deut. 31:9; Prov. 3:1). When used alone in the NT, as here, it may be considered as a general term for the entire OT. In his version Marcion, a schismatic Christian teacher of about A.D. 150, changed the wording from “the law” to “my word” in order to evade the obvious reference to the OT Scriptures and Jesus’ approval of them. Marcion thought himself an ardent follower of Paul, but had no use whatever for anything Jewish, such as the OT. He was one of the first Christians to take the position that the OT was without value or meaning to the Christian believer.

Fail. Gr. *piptō*, “to fall.”

18. Putteth away his wife. See on Matt. 5:27–32; cf. Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11. Adultery is still adultery even when men legalize it. Modern critics of the gospel record claim that in Luke 16:14–18 Luke has brought together a group unrelated sayings spoken by Jesus upon various occasions. But they fail to see the underlying thread of thought that makes of the entire chapter, in fact, a systematic and unified discourse. According to v. 15, the Pharisees and their teachings were held in abomination before God. This situation was not, however, because they had not had sufficient light; they had had “the law and the prophets” all the time (v. 16), and, more recently, the gospel. In v. 17 Jesus affirms the fundamental unity of His teachings with those of the OT, and in v. 18 He gives an illustration of the fact. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus had already used these same examples as evidence that His teachings did not cancel out those of the OT (see on Matt. 5:17–19, 27–32).

19. A certain rich man. [The Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19–31. On parables see pp. 203–207.] For what little is known concerning the circumstances under which this parable was spoken see on vs. 1, 14. The parable was evidently addressed to the Pharisees in particular (see chs. 15:2; 16:14), though the disciples (ch. 16:1), the “publicans and sinners” (ch. 15:1), and without doubt a large audience also (see on chs. 12:1; 14:25; 15:1), were present.

In this parable Jesus continues the lesson set forth in the parable of the Dishonest Steward (ch. 16:1–12), that the use made of the opportunities of the present life determines future destiny (see on vs. 1, 4, 9, 11, 12). That parable had been addressed particularly to the disciples (see on v. 1), but in v. 9 Jesus had turned from the disciples to the Pharisees present (see on v. 9). The Pharisees refused to accept Jesus' teachings on stewardship and sneered at Him (see v. 14). Jesus then pointed out that they might be honored by men, but that God read their hearts like an open book (see on v. 15). They had had sufficient light; they had long enjoyed the instruction of "the law and the prophets," and since the ministry of John the added light of the gospel had been theirs (see on v. 16). In vs. 17, 18 Jesus affirms that the principles set forth in "the law" are immutable—God has not changed—and gives an example of this sublime truth. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is then given to show that destiny is decided in this present life by the use made of its privileges and opportunities (see COL 260). In the first place, the "certain rich man" represents all men who make a wrong use of life's opportunities, and, in a collective sense, it represents also the Jewish nation, which, like the rich man, was making a fatal mistake (see COL 267). The parable consists of two scenes, one representing this life (vs. 19–22), and another the next (vs. 23–31). The parable of the Dishonest Steward approached the problem from the positive point of view, that is, from the point of view of one who did make preparations for the future. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus approaches the same problem from the negative point of view, that is, from the point of view of one who failed to make such preparation. The rich man erred in thinking that salvation is based on Abrahamic descent rather than upon character (cf. Eze. 18).

Like all other parables, that of the Rich Man and Lazarus must be interpreted in harmony with its context and with the general tenor of Scripture. One of the most important principles of interpretation is that each parable was designed to teach one fundamental truth, and that the details of the parable need not necessarily have significance in themselves, except as "props" for the story. In other words, the details of a parable must not be pressed as having a literal meaning in terms of spiritual truth unless the context makes clear that such a meaning is intended. Out of this principle grows another—that it is not wise to use the details of a parable to teach doctrine. Only the fundamental teaching of a parable as clearly set forth in its context and confirmed by the general tenor of Scripture, together with details explained in the context itself, may legitimately be considered a basis for doctrine. See pp. 203, 204. The contention that Jesus intended this parable to teach that men, whether good or bad, receive their rewards at death violates both of these principles.

As clearly set forth in the context (see above), this parable was designed to teach that future destiny is determined by the use men make of the opportunities of this present life. Jesus was not discussing either the state of man in death or the time when rewards will be passed out; He was simply drawing a clear distinction between this life and the next and showing the relationship of each to the other. Furthermore, to interpret this parable as teaching that men receive their rewards immediately at death clearly contradicts Jesus' own declaration that "the Son of man shall . . . reward every man according to his works" when He "shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels" (see on Matt. 16:27; 25:31–41; cf. 1 Cor. 15:51–55; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 22:12; etc.). It is one of the most important rules of interpretation that figurative expressions and narratives are to be

understood in terms of the literal statements of Scripture concerning the truths referred to. Even those who attempt to force this parable into a pattern of interpretation that teaches contrary to the immediate context and to the general tenor of Christ's teachings concede that many of the details of the parable are figurative (see on vs. 22–26).

It may then properly be asked, "Why would Jesus introduce into a parable figurative illustrations that do not accurately represent truth as clearly set forth elsewhere in the Scriptures, and particularly in His own literal statements?" The answer is that He was meeting people on their own ground. Many in the audience—without the least OT Scriptural reason for doing so—had come to believe in the doctrine of a conscious state of existence between death and the resurrection (see COL 263). This erroneous belief, which does not appear in the OT, pervades post-exilic Jewish literature in general (see pp. 83–102), and like many other traditional beliefs, had become a part of Judaism by the time of Jesus (see on Mark 7:7–13). In this parable Jesus simply made use of a popular belief in order thereby to make forcibly clear an important lesson He sought to plant in the minds of His hearers. It may also be noted that in the preceding parable, that of the Dishonest Steward (Luke 16:1–12), Jesus neither commended nor approved of the dishonest steward's course of action, although that action constitutes the main part of the story (see on v. 8).

Even the modernist *International Critical Commentary* comments as follows on v. 22: "The general principle is maintained that bliss and misery after death are determined by conduct previous to death; but the details of the picture are taken from Jewish beliefs as to the condition of souls in Sheol [see on Prov. 15:11], and must not be understood as confirming those beliefs."

Sometimes attention is called to the fact that Jesus does not state that the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a parable, at least apparently in so far as Luke's account goes (although one ancient manuscript [D] does call it a parable), whereas, elsewhere parables are usually so labeled (Matt. 13:3, 24, 33, 44, 45, 47). But it should be pointed out that although Jesus *usually* introduced a parable either by stating that it was a parable or by saying that the kingdom of heaven was *like* a person or a thing in the specific circumstances He then proceeded to relate, He did not *always* do so (see Luke 15:8, 11; 16:1 for examples). The same is true of various OT parables such as those of Judges 9:8–15 and 2 Kings 14:9, yet no one professes to believe that because these parables are not clearly labeled as such they are to be taken literally. The fallacy of such an argument is rendered obvious by a mere reading of the few references cited.

In this "rich man" Jesus undoubtedly intended the Pharisees to see themselves, and in the unhappy experience of the "rich man" to picture their own hapless fate (see on v. 14). Compare this "rich man" with the one of the preceding parable (v. 1). The translation of the Gr. *plousios*, "rich," by the Latin *dives* in the Vulgate, has given rise to the popular tradition that the man's name was Dives. A variety of names appear in various other versions, probably as a result of the feeling that if the poor man of the parable was named, the rich man should be also.

Purple. Gr. *porphura*, "a purple fabric," or "a garment made from purple cloth"; here it probably refers to the costly outer garment, the "cloak," or "mantle" (Gr. *himation*; see on Matt. 5:40), dyed a royal purple color. Purple was the color of royal dignity. Originally, *porphura* referred to a species of shellfish common in the Mediterranean, the

murex, from which a purple dye was extracted. Then the term, or its equivalent, came to be applied to cloth so dyed or a garment made from that cloth (see Mark 15:17, 20; Acts 16:14; Rev. 17:4; etc.). This dye came in three shades, which might be described as purple, crimson, and blue.

Fine linen. Gr. *bussos*, “flax,” or “linen,” the cloth made from it; here it probably refers to the under garment, the “coat,” or “tunic” (Gr. *chitōn*; see on Matt. 5:40), made of Egyptian flax. At first *bussos* referred to the flax itself, and then came to be applied to linen cloth made from the flax. As “purple” was the color of royal dignity, so “fine linen” was the fabric of luxury (see Rev. 18:12; 19:8, 14).

20. Beggar. Gr. *ptōchos*, from the word *ptassō*, “to crouch,” “to cower,” “to go cowering or stooping like a beggar.” Sometimes *ptōchos* means simply “poor,” or used as a noun, “poor man” (see on Matt. 5:3).

Lazarus. Gr. *Lazaros*, a name derived from the common Hebrew name *’El’azar* (see on Ex. 6:23), which means “God has helped.” It is to be observed that the name is most appropriate to the spiritual condition of the man in the parable who bears it. This is the only recorded instance where Jesus gave one of the characters in a parable a name, a procedure made necessary in this case because of the dialogue of the parable (see Luke 16:23–31). Although but a few weeks later Jesus actually did raise Lazarus of Bethany from the dead (see John 11:1–46), there is no connection between the man of the parable and the one who became the object of Jesus’ greatest miracle.

Laid at his gate. The rich man had a continuing opportunity to relieve the needs of Lazarus, but did not do so. To be sure, he did not mistreat the sufferer, who, he no doubt concluded, must be suffering under the judgment of God. His attitude was similar to that expressed by Cain when he said, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9). His relations with Lazarus did not involve the commission of wrong deeds, but rather the omission of deeds of mercy. He took a negative attitude toward his responsibilities in life, rather than a positive one. He knew nothing of the true meaning of the “second” great commandment of the law, which requires love toward one’s fellow men (see on Matt. 5:43; 22:39; 25:35–44). Like the Jewish nation, this rich man was doing no positive good, and was for that reason guilty of doing positive harm. All the advantages Heaven had accorded him were being appropriated to his own pleasure and gratification (see COL 291).

Full of sores. Or, “ulcerated.” The fact that Lazarus was “laid” at the gate indicates that he was an invalid, unable to move about by himself.

21. Desiring to be fed. This was the reason for his being at the gate. He was in dire need, and the rich man was able to supply that need. There is nothing in the story to suggest that Lazarus murmured or complained against God because of his poverty and suffering. Apparently, like Job, he bore it all with patience and fortitude.

Crumbs which fell. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “the falling [things]”; that is, the table scraps (see on Mark 7:28). Apparently the rich man never turned a hand to provide Lazarus with food.

Licked his sores. It is not entirely clear whether this alleviated his misery or added to it, though the latter seems the more probable. If so, this was the climax of misery for the poor sufferer. Apparently he was unable to prevent these half-wild scavengers (see on Matt. 7:6; 15:26) from licking his ulcers.

22. Carried by the angels. Compare Matt. 24:31. For principles to guide in the interpretation of Luke 16:25–31, see on v. 19. It should be remembered that the purpose of the parable is to compare the opportunities of this life, and the use made of them, with the rewards of the life to come. Destiny is fixed at death, and men must use well this present life if they would enjoy the privileges of the next.

Abraham's bosom. A typically Jewish idiom, meaning “paradise.” The Talmud (*Kiddushim* 72a; in Soncino ed., p. 369) mentions “Abraham's lap” as a place of the blessed dead. On another occasion Jesus spoke of paradise as a place where “many” would “come from the east and west” and “sit down with Abraham” at the feast of “the kingdom of heaven” (see on Matt. 8:11; Luke 14:15).

On Jesus being “in the bosom of the Father” see on John 1:18. On “leaning on the bosom” of someone while reclining at a feast see on John 13:23. Abraham was the father of the Jews (see John 8:39, 56), and they had practically come to look to him for salvation in place of God (see on Luke 16:24). They conceived of Abraham as welcoming his children to paradise, as, in much the same way, Peter is sometimes now represented as greeting Christians at the gate of heaven.

Was buried. Those who hold that this narrative is literal, and not a parable, should note that if the rich man is literally and bodily in torment, then Lazarus was borne to heaven literally and bodily. However, the bodies of both Lazarus and the rich man returned to the dust, whence they had come (see Gen. 2:7; 3:19; Eccl. 12:7).

23. Hell. Gr. *hadēs*. “grave,” or “death” (see on Matt. 11:23). *Hadēs* is the abode of all men, good and bad, until the resurrection. Literally, Lazarus would be there also.

His eyes. The body of the rich man, now in *hades*, is lifeless. He cannot see (see on v. 24).

Torments. Gr. *basanoi*, related to the verb *basanizō*, which is used of persons suffering intensely from disease (Matt. 8:6), of the tossing of the waves of the sea (Matt. 14:24), and of the disciples “toiling” at the oars (Mark 6:48). It is also used of emotional stress (2 Peter 2:8), and of the “torment” evil spirits feared when brought face to face with Jesus (Matt 8:29; Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28). *Basanos* (singular of *basanoi*) thus seems to indicate acute distress or agitation.

The idea that at death men go to a place where they suffer “torments” is utterly foreign to the Scriptures, which teach plainly that “the dead know not any thing” (Eccl. 9:5; see on Ps. 146:4). Jesus Himself compared death to a sleep (see John 11:11, 14). To conclude from this parable that Jesus was teaching that at death the wicked are taken to a place where they undergo “torments” is to make Him here contradict His plain teachings on that subject upon other occasions, as well as the teachings of the Bible as a whole. It is in the “hell” of *geenna* that sinners are to experience fiery torments (see on Matt. 5:22), not in *hadēs*. When Jesus therefore presented the rich man as a “tormented in this flame” (Luke 16:24), in *hadēs*, He is clearly speaking figuratively, and it is unwarranted to interpret His words literally. See on v. 19 for principles of interpretation involved in the explanation of parables.

Seeth Abraham. Can it be that heaven and hell are within speaking distance, and that those in heaven witness the suffering of friends and loved ones in hell without being able

to alleviate their torment, while those in hell can observe the bliss of the righteous in heaven? Yet this is precisely what this parable teaches if it is to be taken literally (see on v. 19). But those who believe it is literal will hasten to add that “Abraham’s bosom” is only a figure of speech, that the saints are not literally all resting in his “bosom.” And they will also declare that the proximity of heaven and hell, here pictured, is also purely figurative. But the moment they admit that these and other obviously figurative portions of the parable are not to be taken literally, they concede the figurative character of the entire parable. If they are unwilling to admit that the entire parable is figurative, they are forced to concede that their decision as to whether one part is or is not to be taken figuratively is simply a matter of their own arbitrary choice, and not based on any clearly defined and consistent principle of interpretation.

Lazarus in his bosom. See on v. 22. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading “Lazarus resting in his bosom.”

24. Father Abraham. Apparently, according to the parable, Abraham is presented as presiding over *hadēs* (see on v. 23). The rich man addresses Abraham as if he were God. The sufferer is a descendant of the patriarch, and appeals to him as a son to a father.

Send Lazarus. The rich man evidently assumes that Lazarus should be placed at his beck and call in *hadēs*, which, in a sense, would be a continuation of their relative positions on earth.

Dip. Gr. *baptō* (see on Matt. 3:6).

Tip of his finger. Those who seek to find in this parable a support for the false doctrine of immortal, disembodied souls, find here embarrassment instead. As if disembodied spirits have “fingers”! Lazarus’ body was in the grave, and therefore his fingers were also in the grave. It is incredible that one disembodied spirit should take a finger, which it is not supposed to have, dip it in water, and then touch the nonexistent tongue of another disembodied spirit. Obviously, Jesus is relating an imaginative story designed to make clear a certain particular truth concerning the relationship between this life and the next (see on v. 19), and does not intend His words to be taken literally. To the rich man, now figuratively suffering in *hades*, the least alleviation of his “torments” would be graciously accepted. The rich man now longs for a drop of clear, cool water as Lazarus formerly desired the scraps from his table (see on v. 21). If the rich man had “eyes” (v. 23) and a “tongue” (v. 24), and Lazarus had a “finger” (v. 24), it would necessitate the teaching that immediately at death good and bad men go to their rewards as real beings with bodily parts! However, that they do not immediately go to their rewards at death is obvious from the parable itself—their bodies were in the grave, where there is no such thing as fire (see on v. 22).

Tormented in this flame. For evidence that it is not at death, but rather when Jesus returns visibly to this earth (after the millennium) that the wicked suffer the fires of hell, see on v. 19. Concerning “everlasting fire” see on Matt. 5:22.

25. Son. Gr. *teknon* (see on ch. 15:31).

Receivedst. He had received all the good things that anyone could wish in his lifetime, and had made no preparations for the future life. He had applied the principle of Matt. 6:33 in reverse—he had sought “all these things” first and hoped that God would find some way of adding heaven later on. Compare the experience of the Rich Fool (see

on Luke 12:16–21) and Jesus' instruction about laying up riches in heaven (see on Matt. 6:19–21). The rich man had all the reward he was going to get (see on Matt. 6:2). His account in heaven showed him to be a moral bankrupt. It should be pointed out that he was not punished for *possessing* wealth (see on v. 19), but for *misusing* it. He squandered it on himself rather than putting it to use in the service of God and his fellow man (cf. Matt. 19:21, 22; 25:25–30). It is no sin to be rich, for Abraham was very rich (see Gen. 13:2). The rich man of the parable simply chose to forget that he was accountable for the way in which he used his riches.

Lazarus evil things. In the same way that the rich man was not punished because he was rich, Lazarus was not rewarded in heaven simply because he had been poor while on earth. It is moral character, not material possessions, that determines destiny.

26. Besides all this. Abraham's answer to the rich man's plea consists of two parts. In the first (v. 25) Abraham virtually declares that it would not be right to grant the request, and in the second (v. 26) he points out that the arrangements of the future life make it impossible to do so.

Gulf. Gr. *chasma*, "a chasm," or "a gaping opening," from *chainō*, "to yawn." The "gulf" represents the difference in moral character between the rich man and Lazarus (see COL 269). That it is "fixed" emphasizes the fact that after death character cannot be changed. It is too late to change it (see Isa. 26:10). This chasm that barred the rich man from the bliss of "Abraham's bosom" had been formed in the present life, by his own neglect to make proper use of opportunities then afforded for forming the right kind of character (see COL 271).

27. I pray thee therefore. The rich man here implies that he had not had a fair warning of the fate that awaited him at death.

Send him. He himself is unable to communicate with living relatives, and "Abraham" will not permit Lazarus to do so.

29. Moses and the prophets. That is, the Scriptures of the OT. This was a common designation for the canonical writings of the OT in the days of Jesus (see on v. 16). Again and again Jesus pointed to the OT as being of the highest value in matters of faith and doctrine, and, as here, recommended it to His hearers as a safe and sure guide to salvation (see Matt. 5:17–19; Luke 24:25, 27, 44; John 5:39, 45–47).

Let them hear them. According to Jesus' admonition here given—though ostensibly it was uttered by Abraham to the rich man—the OT Scriptures constituted for the people of His day a sufficient guide to salvation and an authoritative source of information for people in this life concerning the future life. The rich man had ample warning of the fate that awaited men who chose to live as he had lived. Additional light would have been rejected had it been given (see on v. 31).

30. Nay, father Abraham. The rich man protests against the decision of Abraham, implying that he knows better than Abraham does. Apparently he had not found the OT convincing evidence, and doubts that his five brothers will. Those who today lightly cast aside the solemn messages of the OT would do well to ponder the fate of the rich man of this parable who, though he had access to "Moses and the prophets," had not been profited thereby.

If one went unto them. That is, if *any* one would come to them from the dead. As noted under v. 19, the rich man represents not only individuals who fail to take advantage of the opportunities this life provides for the formation of character and for doing good to

their fellow men, but also the Jewish nation, which, as a corporate entity, was pursuing the same course (see Vol. IV, pp. 30-33).

In demanding additional evidence the rich man reflects the repeated demands of the scribes and Pharisees for “a sign.” But the life, teachings, and works of Jesus constituted convincing evidence of His divinity for all whose motives were sincere (cf. on Matt. 15:21; 16:1). However, the kind of evidence Jesus offered them was not the kind they wanted.

31. If they hear not. See on v. 30. Those who are not impressed by the plain statement of eternal truth to be found in Scripture would not be more favorably impressed by the greatest of miracles. A few weeks after narrating this parable Jesus raised from the dead a man named Lazarus, as if in response to the challenge of the Jewish leaders for greater evidence than they had heretofore. But that very miracle led the leaders of the nation to intensify their plot against Jesus’ life (see on John 11:47–54). Not only so; they felt it necessary to do away with Lazarus in order to safeguard their own untenable position (see John 12:9, 10; DA 588). The Jews thus gave a literal demonstration of the truth of Jesus’ statement here, that those who reject the OT would reject “greater” light, even the testimony of one who “rose from the dead.”

Persuaded. That is, to repent (see v. 30).

Though one rose. A few weeks after this our Lord raised Lazarus from the dead (see on John 11:1), as if to provide His carping critics with a fulfillment of the request expressed by the rich man of the parable. But, as Jesus has “father Abraham” warn the rich man, most of the Jews still refused to believe. In fact, it was that very miracle that prompted them more definitely than in the past to plot His death (John 11:47–54).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 COL 366; 3T 401

1, 2 1T 226

1–9COL 366–375

2 AH 368; COL 374; CS 178; GW 267; Te 48; TM 399; 2T 280, 501, 510, 518, 570, 571, 648, 684, 689; 3T 119, 386, 390, 544; 4T 468, 481, 612, 619; 5T 156, 465; 7T 176, 282, 295; 9T 246

2–9COL 367; CS 100

5 MYP 306; 6T 480; 9T 245

8 COL 370; CS 149; 4T 68, 389

9 COL 373, 375; Ed 145; 1T 539, 542; 2T 664; 3T 117

9–111T 198

9–121T 538

10 AH 297, 387; CG 123, 154; CH 409; COL 266, 356; Ed 58, 59, 61, 114; ML 172; MM 177, 205; MYP 143, 148, 228, 230; PK 218, 222, 228, 487; PP 223, 574; TM 287; 2T 48, 78, 84, 309, 312, 700; 3T 22, 224, 556; 4T 186, 309, 311, 337, 487, 561, 572, 591; 5T 414; 6T 172; WM 153

10, 11 FE 152

11 2T 250; 3T 405; 4T 311; WM 17

11, 12 TM 286

11–13IT 199

14, 15 1T 539

17 DA 308

19–21COL 260
19–31COL 260–271; 1T 539; WM 172
20, 21 2T 197
22–26COL 263
26 Ev 620
27–31COL 264
29, 31 PP 367
31 DA 407, 799

CHAPTER 17

1 *Christ teacheth to avoid occasions of offence.* 3 *One to forgive another.* 6 *The power of faith.* 7 *How we are bound to God, and not he to us.* 11 *He healeth ten lepers.* 22 *Of the kingdom of God, and the coming of the Son of man.*

1. Then said he. [*Forgiveness, Faith, and Service, Luke 17:1–10*]. Nothing is said as to the time and place of the following section of Luke's Gospel account. There seems to be little or no direct connection with the preceding chapter, so far as subject matter is concerned. Furthermore, the Pharisees, previously addressed (see on ch. 16:14), seem to be absent now, in vs. ch. 1–19 of 17. And since there is a journey recorded (see ch. 17:11) before the Pharisees are again introduced into the narrative (v. 20), it seems most probable that there is a transition in time and place between chs. 16 and 17. From the record of ch. 17 it appears that this journey took Jesus through Samaria and the borders of Galilee, and eventually brought Him across the Jordan into Peraea once again (see on Luke 17:11; see Closing Peraean Ministry).

The lack of a clear connection between the various subdivisions of the instruction given in vs. 1–10 has led some to think that Luke here reports the gist of what was given upon various occasions. This is entirely possible, and it may be that Luke here records the high points of instruction given the disciples during the course of this journey. At the same time it is possible to discover an underlying relationship between the various parts, but whether actual unity of thought exists is debatable. In vs. 1, 2 Jesus states that it is a sin to lead others into sin. In vs. 3, 4 He points to the disciples' duty to forgive others when they have done wrong. Verses 5, 6 deal with faith as essential to living out the principles of the gospel, and vs. 7–10 constitute a parable illustrating gospel principles. For comment on vs. 1, 2 see on Matt. 18:6, 7.

Offences. Gr. *skandala*, literally, "occasions for stumbling" (see on Matt. 5:29).

3. Take heed. For comment on vs. 3, 4 see on Matt. 18:15–22. To fail to forgive others is one way of provoking them to rashness and to sin. Verses 1, 2 of Luke 17 are concerned with sin on our part against others, vs. 3, 4 with our attitude when others sin against us. We are to avoid causing others to stumble, and at the same time we are to be merciful to them when they cause us to stumble.

Against thee. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words, though the context makes evident that this is the kind of trespass to which Jesus refers.

4. Seven times. See on Matt. 18:21, 22.

5. The apostles. Whether Luke intends to distinguish between the Twelve as "apostles" and the others who regularly followed Him as "disciples" (see v. 1) is not clear. Verses 5, 6 are concerned with the power of faith.

Increase our faith. See on Matt. 17:20. The context makes it probable that this request came at a time other than the occasion represented in Luke 17:1–4 (see on v. 1). It

seems that the “apostles” felt they had a measure of faith, but realized that it was not adequate.

6. Faith. The possession of faith, Jesus says, is not a matter of quantity but of quality. Either a person has faith or he does not have faith. The very smallest amount of faith is sufficient to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks. It is not so much the amount of faith, as the genuineness of it.

Sycamine. Gr. *sukaminos*, the black mulberry tree. The term *sukaminos*, though considered by some as distinct, was often used synonymously with the *sukomorea*, the name of the white mulberry tree, otherwise known as sycamore-fig tree. *Sukomorea* is commonly translated “sycamore” (see on Amos 7:14; Luke 19:4). Neither tree should be confused with our sycamore.

Planted in the sea. It is probable that Jesus intentionally chose an illustration so difficult as to be absurd. It is evident that He did not intend His disciples to perform magic feats such as this. This illustration is similar to that of a camel going through the eye of a needle (see on Matt. 19:24). Both are difficult to the point of literal impossibility, and Jesus did not intend the disciples to contemplate doing either in a literal sense. None of His own miracles were of this sort.

7. Which of you. [*Unprofitable Servants*, Luke 17:7–10. On parables see pp. 203–207.] It seems that this brief parable was spoken in answer to the request recorded in v. 5, though this relationship is not certain. Faith qualifies men to do their duty as servants of God (see on v. 10). If this relationship to v. 5 is not valid, it is probable that the parable was spoken to the disciples at some other point on the journey mentioned briefly in v. 11 (see on v. 1).

A Servant. Gr. *doulos*, “a bond servant,” or “a slave.”

Plowing. The master’s home would probably be in the village or town, and his land not far away. Usually the “servants” would leave town in the morning to work in the fields and return in the morning to work in the fields and return home in the evening (see on Num. 35:4; Ruth 2:3; 3:4; 4:1).

By and by. Gr. *eutheōs*, “at once,” or “immediately” (see on Mark 1:10). In Old English usage the expression “by and by” meant “immediately,” though now it means the very opposite. Here *eutheōs* modifies the verb “go” rather than the verb “say.” Thus, it is not that the master “says immediately,” but rather that he says “go immediately.”

8. Will not rather? According to the Greek a positive answer is here expected to the question (see on ch. 6:39). Compare the negative answer expected in ch. 17:9.

Gird thyself. See Luke 12:37; see on Ps. 65:6.

9. Doth he thank? According to the Greek a negative answer is here expected to the question (see on ch. 6:39). Compare the positive answer expected in ch. 17:8.

I trow not. An Old English expression meaning “I think not.” Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of these words.

10. We are unprofitable servants. That is, “we deserve no special commendation.” The master has received his due from them, but nothing more worth mentioning. He has not profited by their service to the extent that he should feel obliged to show them special honor. They have their wages, and that is all they should expect. He is under no particular obligation to them. In other words, Jesus had a right to expect much of His disciples, and

God has a right to expect much of us today. When we have done our best for Him we do not thereby place Him under any particular obligation to us. We have done no more than, by right, we should do. Paul reflects the spirit of true service when he remarks that all he has endured and suffered for Christ's sake is "nothing to glory of" (1 Cor. 9:16). His service was motivated by a profound sense of obligation to his Master. In preaching the gospel he was discharging a weighty obligation—"woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16).

11. As he went to Jerusalem. [*The Ten Lepers, Luke 17:11–19. Cf. on Mark 1:40–45; see Closing Peraean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.*] The journey here referred to seems to be in the nature of a circuit, first through Samaria, then the borders of Galilee, then probably across the Jordan through Peraea, and eventually, arrival at Jerusalem. If so, it may be possible, as some have suggested, that this journey is to be equated with the one mentioned in John 11:54, where Jesus and his disciples retire northward from the vicinity of Bethany and Jerusalem in order to avoid the open hostility that followed the raising of Lazarus (v. 53). This northward journey would bring them to the borders of Galilee. Thus, even though Jesus was actually going away from Jerusalem, He was making the final circuit that would eventually bring Him back to the city and to the cross. And also, during the course of this journey, Jesus probably remained with His disciples in Samaria for a brief time, no doubt devoting at least part of it to ministering to the people there. This was probably followed by a brief period spent in Peraea, whence Jesus passed through Jericho and Bethany to attend the final Passover.

Through the midst. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading *dia meson*, literally, "through [what lies] between," rather than *dia mesou*, "through the midst of." Luke here seems to speak, not of a journey through Samaria and through Galilee, from which Jesus had already taken His final departure (see on Matt 19:1, 2) a few weeks or months earlier, but of a journey between the two regions, that is, along the border between them.

12. Ten men. These men were not within the village, as this would not be permitted. They accosted Jesus as He was about to enter the village. They may have shared a rude hut out in the open fields at some considerable distance from the village. For comments concerning the nature of the disease, the restrictions on those suffering from it, the attitude of the Jews toward those suffering from it, and the ritual provisions that applied to those healed of the disease, see on Mark 1:40–45, which records the first instance of Jesus' healing leprosy.

Stood afar off. As the law required. They were not permitted to come close to other men, even on the highway. These leprosy victims were more careful in abiding by the law of segregation than the one mentioned in Mark 1:40–45.

13. Master. Gr. *epistatēs* (see on ch. 5:5).

4. Shew yourselves. As required by the law of Moses (see on Mark 1:44).

As they went. Healing was conditional upon an act of faith. They were not healed so long as they lingered in Jesus' presence, but only as they proceeded to carry out His instructions. When they left Jesus they were still leprous. It is evident that had they awaited visible evidence of healing before setting out for Jerusalem, where they were to be pronounced "clean," healing would never have come. It was necessary for them to act in faith, as if they were already healed, before healing actually came. He who does not

come to the Lord in faith need not expect to “receive any thing of the Lord” (James 1:7; cf. Heb. 11:6). Without obedience there is no faith, for “faith without works is dead” (see James 2:17–20). He who has genuine faith will act in accordance with every requirement of God, but without faith obedience is impossible and unavailing. Neither can exist alone without the other (see James 2:17).

15. One of them. One, and one only (see v. 17).

Glorified God. Realizing that divine power had released him from the bonds of his loathsome disease, “one of them” made first things first—he praised God. This Samaritan stands out in the gospel record as a prime example of gratitude.

16. Fell down on his face. The typical Oriental posture of supplication and gratitude, whether to God or to man (see on Esther 3:2).

He was a Samaritan. Possibly the other nine felt that, as sons of Abraham, they deserved to be healed. But this Samaritan, who may have considered that he did not deserve the blessing of health that had come to him suddenly and unexpectedly, appreciated the gift Heaven now bestowed upon him. Those who forget to thank God for blessings received, and truly to appreciate what God does for them, are in grave danger of forgetting Him altogether (see Rom. 1:21, 22).

17. Where are the nine? Here is evidence that it matters to God whether we appreciate the good things we receive from His hand. The nine should have been profoundly grateful, but seemingly were not. At least they did not express any appreciation.

18. Stranger. Or, “foreigner.” For other examples of the healing of non-Jews see on Luke 7:1–10; Matt. 15:21–28; Mark 7:31–37; 8:22–26. For the significance of the word “stranger” in the OT see on Ex. 12:19, 43, 45; 20:10; Num. 9:14; Deut. 10:19; 14:21, 29.

19. Thy faith. See on ch. 17:14.

20. He was demanded of the Pharisees. [*When and How the Kingdom Comes, Luke 17:20–37. Cf. on Matt. 24:3, 26–41.*] Whether the Pharisees met Jesus during the course of this journey (see on v. 11), or after His arrival in Peraea, we do not know. It was now probably about the month of March, A.D. 31, at most a few weeks prior to the Passover. Compare also previous demands made by the Pharisees for information from John the Baptist (see John 1:19–22) and from Jesus (see Matt. 16:1; Mark 2:16; John 2:18).

When the kingdom. It was now nearly four years since John the Baptist had begun proclaiming that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (see Matt. 3:2; see on v. 1). For at least two years the people of Galilee had heard Jesus proclaiming the same message (see on Matt. 4:12; Mark 1:15). Now, the Pharisees come inquiring how much longer they must wait before they can expect to see tangible evidence of the fact that the kingdom is, indeed, coming. In making this demand the Pharisees quite evidently pose a challenge to Jesus’ Messiahship, and imply that He is a false messiah.

Of God. Apparently it was their erroneous concept of the Messianic kingdom that prompted the Pharisees to ask this question (see on ch. 4:19). They conceived of the kingdom of God as a political entity, with Messiah King a temporal ruler who would subdue all nations and subject them to Jewish rule (see Vol. IV, pp. 25–38). Inasmuch as their selfish dreams had not yet materialized, the Pharisees were certain that the “kingdom” had not yet arrived. In their minds it was still future.

Not with observation. Literally, “not with careful watching.” The kingdom of which John and Christ had spoken, the kingdom of grace, was already here, but the blind

Pharisees had not detected it because they were observing only the outward appearance of things (see 1 Sam. 16:7). They had witnessed no signs that could be construed as heralding the kind of kingdom they had in mind. It would take spiritual discernment to detect the coming of the kingdom of divine grace to the hearts of men (see on Luke 17:21).

21. *Within you.* That is, meaning either “in your midst” or “in your hearts.” There has been some dispute as to which meaning is favored by the context here. The only other use in the NT of the word here translated “within” clearly has the sense of “inside” rather than “in the midst of” (see Matt. 23:26). The kingdom of divine grace was certainly not in the hearts of the Pharisees, and it is this fact that has led many commentators to favor the reading “in your midst.” Yet Jesus was clearly addressing the Pharisees (see on Luke 17:20). It should be noted however that, even so, Jesus’ statement does not require the meaning “in your midst.” He could simply be saying to them, “The kingdom of God is not something that you may expect to see by close observation with your natural eyesight. You will discover it, if at all, within your own hearts.”

22. *Said unto the disciples.* Whether this was in the presence of the Pharisees (see on vs. 20, 21), or at a later time when Jesus was alone with His disciples, is not certain. It would seem that the discourse of vs. 22–37 was spoken either immediately following the comments of vs. 20, 21 or soon thereafter.

Days will come. The discourse of vs. 22–37 deals with the future kingdom of glory rather than with the present kingdom of divine grace (see on Matt. 4:17; 5:2). Jesus has affirmed that the kingdom of grace is already here, set up and operating, in the hearts of men (Luke 17:21). But Jesus now warns His disciples that the kingdom of glory, which the Pharisees erroneously concluded to be the subject of Jesus’ teaching, is yet future—“the days will come” in contrast to “[now] within you” (v. 21).

Desire to see. That is, the actual establishment of the kingdom of glory at the coming of the Son of man (see on Matt. 25:31). Here Jesus refers to the longing in the heart of every true disciple for the full realization of the coming kingdom. The longing of the Twelve would be intensified as they looked back at the opportunities they once had had, but did not fully appreciate at the time, of walking and talking with their beloved Master (see DA 506). Jesus was with them now, yet many were not properly appreciative of His presence. When He would be taken away from them their estimation of the privilege of being with Him would increase greatly. Before His departure He would promise to come back again (see John 14:1–3), and in His absence they would long eagerly for His promised return.

Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

Not see it. Because the time had not yet arrived for His second coming.

23. *See here.* See on Matt. 24:23, 26. At His second coming Jesus’ appearance will not be localized.

Go not after them. Many false messiahs had arisen and more were yet to appear. Perhaps Theudas, whom 400 men followed at one time, and Judas of Galilee, who “drew away much people after him,” may be numbered among the false messiahs (see Acts 5:36, 37). The desert was frequently the congregating place of these political enthusiasts. In the intense longing of the disciples for the return of their Master, they were not to be deceived into thinking that any such upstart, military messiah might be the Christ.

24. As the lightning. See on Matt. 24:27. Like a flash of lightning, the return of Jesus would come suddenly and unexpectedly (see 1 Thess. 5:1–5), but visibly and dramatically.

In his day. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between retaining and omitting this phrase.

25. First must he suffer. The cross must come before the crown (see on Matt. 16:21; Mark 9:31; etc.). The disciples were not to expect the kingdom of glory immediately (see on Matt. 25:31).

Rejected of this generation. See on Matt. 11:16; 23:35–38.

26. As it was. For comment see on Matt. 24:37.

Noe. That is, Noah.

27. They did eat. Literally, “they were eating.” While the antediluvians carried on their normal round of activities, the Flood came and surprised them. They were not expecting so abrupt a change. They were engrossed in their worldly pursuits and pleasures, lulled to sleep by a false sense of security. They were not sufficiently concerned with what was coming (see on Gen. 6:5–13; cf. 2 Peter 2:5).

28. The days of Lot. See on Gen. 18:20, 21; cf. 2 Peter 2:7, 8.

29. Fire and brimstone. See on Gen. 19:24, 25; cf. 2 Peter 3:7, 10–12; Rev. 20:9.

30. Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10; cf. Luke 17:22.

Revealed. Gr. *apokaluptō*, “to uncover”; hence, “to reveal,” “to disclose,” or “to manifest.” Our word “apocalypse” is derived from the noun form of *apokaluptō*. Here, the word refers to the revealing of the Son of man in power and glory, as the corresponding noun from (Gr. *apokalupsis*) sometimes does to the “coming” of Jesus (see 1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 PETER 1:17, 13).

31. In that day. Compare the dual prophecy of Matt. 24:15–20, where the experience of Christians living in Jerusalem when the city fell to the Romans, in A.D. 70, represents, in measure, the experience of Christians prior to the second coming of Christ (see on Matt. 24:16, 17).

Upon the housetop. For comment see on Matt. 24:17.

His stuff. When life itself is at stake worldly possession have little value, and to endeavor to save them may lead to the loss of life itself. Possession in Sodom were of no value to Lot when he had to flee; he was fortunate to escape with his life (see on Gen. 19:17).

32. Remember Lot’s wife. Lot’s wife became a pathetic example of the results of inordinate affection for the material things of this life. It was her desire to hold onto the things she had just left behind in Sodom that caused her death (see on Gen. 19:26).

33. Save his life. Or, “save himself.” See on Matt. 16:25. This great paradox of Christianity expresses one of the great eternal truths of the gospel (see on Matt. 6:33).

35. Two women. For comment see on Matt. 24:41.

36. Two men. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for omitting v. 36. However, the same statement is uncontested in Matt. 24:40 (see comment there).

37. Where, Lord? That is, “under what circumstances, Lord?” The disciples seem to be puzzled as to how and when the things of which Jesus speaks would be (see on Matt. 24:3).

Wheresoever the body is. Jesus seems to have made use of the common proverb of the day in answer to their question. For comment see on Matt. 24:28.

Eagles. Gr. *aetoi*, probably here, “vultures” rather than “eagles.” Eagles are not gregarious, nor do they feed on carrion as do the vultures (see on Hab. 1:8).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 COL 248, 249
3, 4 COL 250
5 CSW 72; MYP 121
10 Ev 596; 2T 465; 3T 526; 4T 228; 7T 209; WM 316
12–16DA 348, 488; MH 134; ML 170; 5T 315
12–193T 179
20, 21 7T 143
20–22DA 506
26 FE 221; PP 104; TM 132; 3T 472; 4T 308
26, 27 4T 309; 5T 365
26–28PK 717; FE 317
26–30Te 283; 3T 162
28 PP 166
28–30CH 24; PP 166; 3T 163
29 GW 126
30 PP 104
33 9T 56
35, 36 TM 234

CHAPTER 18

3*Of the importunate widow.* 9*Of the Pharisee and the publican.* 15*Children brought to Christ.* 18*A ruler that would follow Christ, but is hindered by his riches.* 28*The reward of them that leave all for his sake.* 31*He foresheweth his death,* 35*and restoreth a blind man to his sight.*

1. A parable. [*The Unjust Judge*, Luke 18:1–8. Cf. on ch. 11:5–8; on parables see pp. 203–207.] Very likely this parable was spoken on the same occasion as the instruction recorded in ch. 17:20–37 (see on v. 20; cf. COL 164, 165). It was probably now about the month of March, A.D. 31, not long after the raising of Lazarus (see on vs. 11, 20) and but a few weeks before the final Passover. The place was probably somewhere in Peraea. Some of the preceding instruction (see on v. 20) had been addressed directly to the Pharisees, and it is therefore probable that they were still present. However, Jesus had been addressing His disciples (ch. 17:1; cf. 16:1) when the Pharisees interrupted Him with their question about when the kingdom would appear (ch. 17:20). It is probable that Jesus now turns His attention again primarily to the disciples. As a matter of fact, after specifically answering the question of the Pharisees (v. 21), Jesus had already turned His attention back, in part, to the disciples (see on v. 22).

It should be noted that the admonition to earnest prayer here given follows immediately a discussion of the time of crisis preceding the second advent (ch. 17:22–37), particularly from the standpoint of deceptions that would tend to lead the elect astray. The same is true of a similar admonition in ch. 21:36 (see also Mark 13:33).

To this end. This parable applies specifically to the experience of God's people in the last days (COL 164), in anticipation of the deception they must meet and the persecution they must suffer.

Always to pray. Particularly in view of the second advent and the time of testing that precedes it. Prayer is more than a duty, it is a necessity. Jesus does not here refer to engaging in prayer to the exclusion of practical effort put forth to cooperate with heavenly agencies in securing the objectives for which prayer is made, or to the neglect of personal responsibility (see below on "not to faint"). Jesus means that we should not give up praying when the answers to our prayers are delayed (see vs. 7, 8). To pray "always" also means so to live, day by day and hour by hour, as to be in constant touch with God. For the principles of interpretation of parables see pp. 203, 204. For a discussion on the prayer life of Jesus see on Mark 1:35; 3:13. For further instruction concerning prayer given by Jesus to His disciples, see on Luke 11:1–9. Compare also his instruction in Matt. 9:38.

Not to faint. That is, they were admonished not to become weary of praying, not to lose heart in praying. The Jews of Christ's time taught the desirability of praying thrice daily (see on Dan. 6:10.) Two of these times were the regular morning and evening hours of prayer, when the morning and evening sacrifices were offered for all Israel and when incense was ministered before the veil (see on Luke 1:9, 10). It is said that some rabbis went so far as to teach that a person should avoid praying at other than the stated times for prayer lest he disturb God and weary Him, as the importunate widow in this parable brought weariness to the unjust judge.

2. In a city a judge. Literally, "a certain judge in a certain city." Jesus was circumspect in using an illustration of this nature. He made sure that His hearers could not refer it to any specific judge. Only too eagerly would Jesus' enemies have availed themselves of any opportunity to charge Him with undermining the government (see on ch. 23:2).

Feared not God. This judge was evidently a law to himself. He exhibited no love either for God or for his fellow men, or respect for either table of the law (see on Matt. 22:34–40).

A widow. In ancient Oriental society a widow was often the most helpless of persons, particularly if she had no sons to champion her rights. This widow apparently had none to protect her. Furthermore, she had nothing wherewith to bribe the callous judge or to offer in payment for justice. The psalmist pictures God as "a judge of the widows" (see Ps. 68:5). James presents it as a mark of "pure religion" to "visit" the widows "in their affliction" (James 1:27). One of the woes Christ pronounced against the scribes and Pharisees was spoken because they "devour widows' houses" (see on Matt. 23:14; see also on Job 22:9).

She came. According to the Greek, "she kept coming."

Avenge me. Or, "do me justice" (see COL 166). It would seem that the widow's husband had left her property, perhaps mortgaged to others, which they refused to return at the stipulated time according to the provisions of the law (see on Lev. 25:23–25). Evidently having no one to champion her rights, the widow was wholly dependent upon the judge's sense of justice and mercy—but he was neither just nor merciful. He was the very antithesis of God; he reflected the character of Satan.

Adversary. Gr. *antidikos*, also used commonly as a legal term for an opponent in a lawsuit; usually the defendant, but sometimes the plaintiff (see on Matt. 5:25). Satan is spoken of as the *antidikos* of the Christian (1 Peter 5:8; see Zech. 3:1–4). *Antidikos* appears also in the LXX of Sam. 2:10; Esther 8:1.

4. He would not. According to the Greek, “he kept on refusing.” He did so persistently.

Afterward he said. Her persistence wore him down.

Within himself. See on v. 11.

I fear not God. See on v. 2.

5. This widow troubleth me. Persistence in pressing her petition was the only weapon the widow had at her disposal. Her great need did not stir the judge’s sense of justice or mercy (see on v. 3), but her persistence was effective in arousing his impatience. Instantly and with little effort on his part he could have ordered justice, but he did not do so until it became easier to dispense justice than to avoid doing so.

I will avenge her. See on v. 3. Not from a sense of justice or from sympathy for her helplessness, but to protect himself from further inconvenience. He had no regard for the law, and was wholly indifferent to suffering and oppression.

Weary me. Literally, “smite me below the eye,” or “smite so as to cause bruises”; hence, figuratively, “beat me out,” or “wear me out,” that is, “give me intolerable annoyance.” It is in this figurative sense of “greatly annoy” that the judge uses this expression here.

6. Unjust. This term directly describes Jesus’ opinion of such a judge, as it does His opinion of the dishonest steward (see on ch. 16:8).

7. Shall not? According to the Greek, a positive answer is expected to the question (see on ch. 6:39). The lesson of the parable is based on the striking contrast between the character of the unjust judge and a just, merciful God. If the judge, for selfish reasons, would eventually respond to the widow’s request, how much more will God respond to those who address their petitions to Him. For a similar contrast see on Matt. 15:26, 27. If persistence with an unrighteous judge brings results, certainly the same virtue will not pass unnoticed and unrewarded by a righteous God.

His own elect. That is, His “chosen” ones (see Ps. 105:6, 43; Isa. 43:20; 65:15).

Cry day and night. That is, continuously, or persistently (see on v. 1). Compare the cry for justice of the “souls” John saw “under the altar” (Rev. 6:9, 10).

Though he bear long with them. It may often seem to “his own elect” that God is delaying His answer (see Hab. 1:2), while all the time He is actually working “speedily.” He sets in operation those forces that will accomplish His good will for the “elect,” and these forces may be in operation long before the results become apparent. Furthermore, God may at times delay “avenging” His “elect” in order that those who are persecuting them may have time and opportunity to repent. God loves the persecutors as well as the persecuted; He is “not slack concerning his promise,” yet at the same time He is “not willing that any should perish” (2 Peter 3:9). Furthermore, character is made perfect through trial (see on Job 23:10), and God may at times delay answering our petitions in order that opportunity may be afforded for the development of character (see DA 200; COL 175, 177). Delay also avails to intensify our sense of need, without which it is often impossible for God to work for us (see COL 152). For God’s attitude toward His “elect”

who suffer unjustly, and for the attitude they should take under such circumstances, see 1 Peter 2:20–24.

8. I tell you. These words lend emphasis to the conclusion here stated.

Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

Cometh. This is one of our Lord's first direct references to His second coming, to which event He had already alluded briefly about six months prior to this time (see Matt. 16:27). The parable of the Tares, spoken approximately a year and a half before this time, refers to "the Son of man" sending His angels to separate the tares from the wheat (see on Matt. 24:31), but does not refer directly to His coming back to this earth again (see Matt. 13:40–43; cf. Luke 17:22–30).

Some critical commentators have failed to see the connection between this statement about the Son of man finding faith on earth when He comes, and the preceding parable. They have concluded, consequently, that it is a detached saying of Jesus that Luke accidentally inserted here. Those who take this point of view have, in so doing, failed to note that it is "when the Son of man cometh" that He will "avenge his own elect" (vs. 7, 8), a fact clearly noted elsewhere in Scripture in connection with His coming (see Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12). It is on that occasion that He sits as judge (Matt. 25:34–46; Rom. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; 1 Peter 4:5; Rev. 19:11).

Shall he find faith? Literally, "Shall he find the faith?" Circumstances will be such immediately prior to Christ's return that it will seem that evil has triumphed and that God has left "his own elect" to suffer and fall before their enemies (see GC 630). A few weeks after giving this parable, as Jesus spoke of the signs of His coming, He admonished His disciples that they must undergo "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21) that would try them to the utmost (v. 22). Nevertheless, the "elect" will "endure unto the end" (v. 13) and be "saved."

9. This parable. [*The Pharisee and the Publican*, Luke 18:9–14; on parables see pp. 203–207.] There is no apparent connection between this parable and the preceding one about the unjust judge, and there seems to be no way of knowing whether the two were given upon the same occasion. This parable, like the preceding one, was probably given about the month of March, A.D. 31, somewhere in the region of Peraea.

Trusted in themselves. Though they are not named specifically, it is clear that Jesus has the Pharisees particularly in mind. This is emphasized by the fact that it is a Pharisee who, in the parable, is set forth as an example of one who "trusted" in himself that he was "righteous" and who "despised others." Scribes and Pharisees had been present upon recent occasions when Jesus was teaching (see on chs. 15:2; 16:14; 17:20), and were probably present also now. In his introduction to the parable Luke points out that it is addressed to those who have faith "in themselves" rather than in God (see ch. 18:8, 9). Theirs is a false faith, in contrast with the true faith God would have them develop. For an illustration of the frame of mind of the Pharisees, "which trusted in themselves," see Paul's description of himself as a Pharisee (Phil. 3:4–6).

That they were righteous. That is, according to their own standards of righteousness, which Pharisees in general scrupulously lived up to, or at least pretended to live up to. The Pharisaic standard of righteousness consisted in strict observance of the laws of Moses and of rabbinical traditions. It was, essentially, righteousness by works. The Pharisaic, legalistic concept of righteousness operated on the premise that salvation was to be earned by observing a certain pattern of conduct, and gave little or no attention to

the necessary devotion of the heart to God and the transformation of a man's motives and objectives in life. The Pharisees emphasized the letter of the law, ignoring the spirit of it. The concept that outward conformity to divine requirements was all that God asked, irrespective of the motive that prompted compliance with them, actuated their thinking and living. At various times Jesus had warned His disciples and others against this formalistic approach to salvation (see on Matt. 5:20; 16:6; Luke 12:1).

Despised. Gr. *exuoutheneō*, "to make of no account," "to despise utterly," or "to treat with contempt." This word is also translated "set at nought" (Luke 23:11; Acts 4:11; Rom. 14:10) and "contemptible" (2 Cor. 10:10). Those who consider themselves paragons of virtue tend to view their fellow men with contempt.

Others. Literally, "the rest," meaning, "all others." That is, the Pharisees treated with contempt all those who did not acknowledge their definition of "righteousness" and did not order their lives accordingly.

10. Two men. Jesus does not mean that no others were present, but mentions only the two men with whom the parable is concerned. One of them considered himself a saint, and "went up" for the purpose of commending himself to God and man. The other looked upon himself as a sinner, and "went up" to confess his sin before God, to plead for His mercy, and to obtain pardon.

Went up. Perhaps used here in reference to the normal ascent from the lower lying regions of the city up to Mt. Moriah. To the Pharisees, attendance at the morning and evening hours of prayer, as well as at other Temple services, was an act of merit intended to win the favor of God and the approbation of men. Of religious acts performed with these motives Jesus said, "They have their reward" (see on Matt. 6:2). A spirit of genuine humility before God and our fellow men is one of the best evidences of conversion (see on Micah 6:8).

Pray. Probably at either the morning or the evening hour of prayer (see on ch. 1:9, 10). Even after Pentecost some of the apostles seem to have followed the practice of attending the Temple service at the hours of prayer (Acts 3:1; cf. ch. 10:3).

A Pharisee. See pp. 51, 52. A Pharisee was the highest Jewish ideal of piety at that time.

A publican. See on p. 66. On the other hand, the publican represented the lowest level in the Jewish social scale.

11. Stood. A not infrequently assumed posture during prayer (see 1 Sam. 1:26; 1 Kings 8:14, 22; Matt. 6:5; Mark 11:25; see on Neh. 8:5; Dan. 6:10).

With himself. That is, inaudibly, perhaps with his lips moving, or in an undertone. Apparently he was addressing himself rather than God. Possibly the Pharisee stood aloof from the other worshipers gathered in the Temple courts, as if he were too good to be closely associated with them, even in prayer.

God, I thank thee. Undoubtedly what he really meant was, "God, you should be thankful to have a person like me among those who have come to worship you. I am incomparably superior to the common herd."

As other men. Literally, "as the rest of men," that is, all other human beings (see on v. 9). The common herd fell far short of his exalted standard of self-righteousness. It is never safe to determine our measure of righteousness by comparison with our fellow men, whatever their state may be (see on Matt. 5:48). In striking contrast with the Pharisee, Paul considered himself the chief of sinners (see 1 Tim. 1:15).

Extortioners. Gr. *harpages*, “ones who snatch away,” “rapacious ones”; hence, “robbers,” or “extortioners” (see on Matt. 7:15; Luke 11:39). The Pharisee begins a recital of his negative virtues. These, he is confident, will endear him to God. He draws up an oral list of some sins of which he is not guilty. He is thankful for his own virtues rather than for God’s righteousness and mercy. He is grateful that he has, by diligent effort, kept strictly within the letter of the law, but seems utterly oblivious of the spirit that must accompany true obedience in order to make it acceptable in God’s sight.

Unjust. Or, “unrighteous.” He had not openly broken the law.

Adulterers. See on Matt. 5:27–32.

Or even as this publican. The word “this” is probably used here, not only to designate the publican, but also to express contempt concerning him (see on chs. 14:30; 15:2). “This publican” was particularly conspicuous, because he could be seen “standing afar off” from the crowd, in another direction (ch. 18:13). As the Pharisee’s eye detects the presence of this social scapegrace, he prays, as it were, “There, Lord, is a specimen of what I mean—that detestable tax collector. I rejoice that I am not a scoundrel as he is.”

12. I fast twice. Having drawn up a catalogue of the vices of which he is not guilty, the Pharisee now turns to enumerate the virtues of which he is particularly proud, ones that evidently he is counting on to purchase his salvation. Not even all Pharisees fasted “twice in the week,” that is, on Mondays and Thursdays (see on Matt. 6:16–18). The Pharisees prided themselves on fasting and tithing more than the letter of the law required, thinking that God would appreciate their voluntary efforts beyond the call of duty, as they liked to think (see on Matt. 23:23). They fasted particularly during the seasons between the Passover and Pentecost, and between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication (see Vol. II, p. 108; Vol. I, pp. 709, 710; Lev. 23:2–42; see on John 10:22).

According to Pharisaic theology, a sufficient credit of supposedly meritorious deeds would cancel out a debit of evil deeds. The Feast of Dedication (see p. 30) came on the 25th day of the 9th month, approximately two months after the Feast of Tabernacles, which closed on the 22d day of the 7th month. Seven weeks, inclusive, elapsed between the Passover and Pentecost.

Later on, zealous Christians fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays at certain seasons of the year, in order to avoid being mistaken for Jews, who fasted on Mondays and Thursdays. In the *Didache* (ch. 8:1), a noncanonical Christian document of the 2d century, the admonition is given, “But let not your fasting be appointed in common with the hypocrites; for they fast on the second day of the week and on the fifth; but do ye fast during the fourth, and the preparation [day].”

Tithes of all. Even of things not specifically mentioned in the Mosaic law on tithing (see on Matt. 23:23)—such things as “mint and anise and cummin.” Perhaps this was more, even, than rabbinical teaching required.

I possess. Literally, “I acquire,” that is, of his increase.

13. Standing afar off. Probably from the Pharisee and from the other worshipers, evidently because he knew that they would all look askance at him. Other people would not relish close association with a publican (see on ch. 3:12).

Lift up. Compare Ezekiel’s description of a righteous man as one who had not “lifted up his eyes to the idols” (Eze. 18:6, 15; cf. v. 12). It was also customary to stand in

prayer, with hands uplifted toward heaven (see 1 Kings 8:22; Ps. 28:2; Ps. 63:4; 134:2; 1 Tim. 2:8).

Smote upon his breast. Literally, “kept on beating his breast.” The tax collector’s actions testify to the sincerity of his words and give a vivid expression of his sense of unworthiness. He felt himself unworthy even to pray. But his sense of need impelled him to pray.

Merciful. Or, “gracious.” See on Matt. 5:7. A sense of need is the first condition of acceptance with God, a consciousness that without His mercy we would be utterly lost (see COL 158). In contrast with the Pharisee, the publican no doubt thought of many vices, and knew that he had practiced them; he thought of the virtues, and knew that he had none of them. Like the apostle Paul, he knew himself to be a sinner (see 1 Tim. 1:15), in desperate need of divine grace. Mercy is one aspect of divine love, one that had not been manifested and therefore could not be known fully until sin entered the universe. Mercy is the expression of divine love manifested to those who do not deserve it. The Greek word here translated “merciful” seems to be closely related in meaning to the Heb. *chesed* (see Additional Note on Psalm 36), commonly translated “mercy” (1 Chron. 16:34; Ps. 136:1–26) or “lovingkindness” (Ps. 51:1; 138:2) or “goodness” (Ps. 52:1).

A sinner. Literally, “the sinner” (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15). The tax collector speaks as if there were no other sinners—he is the only one. Like the Pharisee, he places himself in a class all by himself. He is not virtuous as other men are, he is *the sinner*. The Pharisee thought himself vastly above “other men” (Luke 18:11); the publican thought of himself as being vastly below other men.

14. I tell you. An expression Jesus often used to introduce an important statement of truth or to make it emphatic; also to introduce the conclusion to a line of reasoning or to a parable. The expression, “I tell you,” is frequently recorded by Luke (chs. 4:25; 9:27; 10:24; 12:51; 13:3, 5, 27; 17:34; 18:8, 14; 19:40).

Justified. That is, accepted by God and declared righteous before Him. The Pharisee thought himself righteous (see v. 9), but God did not think so. The publican knew himself to be a sinner (see v. 13), and this realization opened the way for God to pronounce him sinless—a sinner justified by divine mercy (see on v. 13). It was the attitudes of the two men toward themselves and toward God that made the difference.

Rather than. The Pharisee disqualified himself from receiving divine mercy and grace. Self-satisfaction closed the door of his heart to the rich currents of divine love that brought joy and peace to the publican. The prayer of the Pharisee was unacceptable before God, for it was not accompanied with the incense of the merits of Jesus Christ (see PP 353; see on Ex. 30:8).

Exalteth himself. See on Luke 14:11; Mark 9:35. The problem of pride versus humility is at the very heart of the conflict between good and evil.

Luke 18:14 closes the “great insertion” of Luke, as chs. 9:51 to 18:14 are sometimes called (see on ch. 9:51), owing to the fact that none of the other gospel writers take notice of most of the incidents and instruction recorded in this section of the narrative.

15. Infants. [*Blessing the Children*, Luke 18:15–17=Matt. 19:13–15=Mark 10:13–16. Major comment: Matthew.] Or, “babes.”

17. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18.

As a little child. See Matt. 18:2–4.

18. A certain ruler. [*The Rich Young Ruler*, Luke 18:18–30=Matt. 19:16–30=Mark 10:17–31. Major comment: Matthew.]

24. That he was very sorrowful. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of these words.

31. We go up to Jerusalem. [*Jesus Foretells His Death*, Luke 18:31–34=Matt. 20:17–19=Mark 10:32–42. Major comment: Matthew.] Though the incident here recorded is commonly known as Jesus' third announcement of His death, it is actually the sixth so far as the Gospel of Luke is concerned. The first two announcements came during the course of the six months of retirement following Jesus' public rejection in Galilee (see ch. 9:22, 44), between the Passover of A.D. 30 and the Feast of Tabernacles in the same year. Subsequently, during the course of Luke's extended account of the Peraean ministry (chs. 9:51 to 18:14), a phase of Christ's ministry not reported by any of the other gospel writers (see on ch. 9:51), Luke records three additional instances in which Jesus referred, at least indirectly, to His imminent sufferings and death (see chs. 12:50; 13:33; 17:25). These three additional occasions came during the six months following the Feast of Tabernacles of A.D. 30.

34. Neither knew they. Luke dwells more than the other Synoptists upon the complete failure of the disciples to comprehend the sad truths Jesus endeavored to make clear to them. The reason was simply that their minds were filled with misconceptions as to the nature of the kingdom Jesus came to establish. They apparently dismissed from their minds whatever did not agree with their preconceived ideas on the subject (see DA 547, 548).

35. A certain blind man. [*Blind Bartimaeus*, Luke 18:35–43=Matt. 20:29–34=Mark 10:46–52. Major comment: Mark.]

39. They which went before. Or, "the ones who were in front." This furnishes the possibility of an interesting side light on the formation of the group traveling with Jesus. "They which went before" may have been part of Jesus' own company, not simply some of the curious throng that always gathered about Him, nor even some of the pilgrims who chanced to be going up to Jerusalem in the same direction as Jesus (see on Mark 10:47).

42. Saved thee. That is, healed thee.

43. All the people. Luke here adds something that neither Matthew nor Mark mentions—the reaction of those who witnessed the miracle. In contrast with the Jewish leaders, who frequently attributed Jesus' power to the devil (see on Matt. 12:24), the common people, their perception not blinded by prejudice, attributed His power to God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 MH 225

1–8COL 164–180

3 COL 166, 170

7 COL 171; 5T 524

7, 8 COL 177; DA 495; GC 631; PP 203; 1T 183; 6T 282

8 CW 98; PP 103; 5T 167, 232

9 COL 150

9–14COL 150–163

11 COL 150, 152; DA 495; GW 140; MB 6; SL 9; 1T 416; 6T 399

11–141T 331

12 5T 539

12, 13 COL 151
 13 CS 164; DA 495; Ev 291; GW 213; MB 8; ML 19; SC 30, 40; 1T 26; 5T 638; 6T 283
 14 COL 152, 163
 15–17DA 511–517
 16 CG 491, 565; MH 44; Te 290; 1T 397; 4T 142
 18–23DA 518–523
 18–30COL 390–396
 22 1T 207
 25 1T 141
 27 DA 555
 30 5T 42
 31–34DA 547–551
 37 MH 107; 6T 262
 41 4T 178

CHAPTER 19

1 *Of Zacchæus a publican.* 11 *The ten pieces of money.* 28 *Christ rideth into Jerusalem with triumph:* 41 *weepeth over it:* 45 *driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple:* 47 *teaching daily in it. The rulers would have destroyed him, but for fear of the people.*

1. Entered and passed through. [*Zacchæus*, Luke 19:1–10. See Closing Peraean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord.] For the time, circumstances, and background of this incident see on Mark 10:46. It was probably the week before the Passover of A.D. 31, and Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem.

2. *Zacchæus*. Gr. *Zakchaiōs*, from the Heb. *Zakkai*, meaning “pure.” A person bearing the name *Zakkai* is mentioned in the OT (see Ezra 2:9; Neh. 7:14). There is no basis for considering the story of Zacchæus another version of the story of the call of Matthew, as some modern expositors do, especially since Luke records the latter incident also (see ch. 5:27–32). Zacchæus was obviously a Jew (see ch. 19:9); thus the bystanders protested Jesus’ association with him on the basis that he was “a sinner,” not that he was a Gentile (see on v. 7). See on Mark 2:14, 15.

Chief among the publicans. Gr. *architelōnēs*, a compound word meaning “chief tax collector.” Compare *archiereus*, “chief priest” (see Mark 2:26). Today we might speak of Zacchæus as a tax commissioner, or as a collector of revenue. Evidently he was a wealthy customs officer in charge of collections at the important Judean frontier city of Jericho, which was the port of entry for all traffic crossing the river Jordan from the east. The ford to the east of Jericho is said to have been one of the three important points between the Lake of Galilee and the Dead Sea at which that river could be crossed, even in springtime. The evangelist Luke frequently mentions tax collectors (see chs. 3:12; 5:27; 7:29; 15:1; 18:10), and in each instance he speaks of these social outcasts in a favorable way, in harmony with his characteristic emphasis on Jesus as a friend of the poor, the oppressed, and the outcasts of society.

He was rich. With the power of Rome back of them, tax collectors generally collected from the people more than the law called for (see p. 66; see on ch. 3:12).

3. Sought to see Jesus. Possibly he had desired for some time to find an opportunity to see Him. John the Baptist’s early work was done at Bethabara (Bethany), unidentified, but on the eastern bank of the Jordan, perhaps near Jericho (see on Matt. 3:2; John 1:28),

and Zacchaeus had joined the throngs that went out to hear him preach (DA 553). Conceivably he might have been among the tax collectors who asked John, “Master, what shall we do?” (see Luke 3:12). Zacchaeus was impressed with John’s message, and though he was not truly converted at that time, John’s words began to work like leaven in his heart (DA 553). Prior to this time Zacchaeus had heard of Jesus and had begun the task of confession and restitution (DA 553, 555). With hunger of heart he had been longing for an opportunity to see Jesus and learn from Him the way of life more perfectly. To some extent he had already put the principles of the gospel to work in his own life, by acting in harmony with the principles found in Lev. 25:17, 35–37 (see on Luke 19:8). Compare Matthew’s experience (see on Mark 2:13, 14).

Who he was. That is, Zacchaeus wished to see who Jesus was, to pick Him out of the crowd that thronged about Him in the street.

Could not for the press. The narrow streets of ancient cities, often scarcely wider from wall to wall than a man’s outstretched arms could reach, would make Zacchaeus’ problem even more difficult.

4. He ran before. Zacchaeus heard the news of Jesus’ arrival as the Master entered Jericho (see DA 553). No doubt with the throngs of people passing through the city on the way to the Passover the chief tax collector (see on v. 2) would be more than usually busy. But he left everything in order to catch a glimpse of Jesus.

Climbed up. A rather undignified procedure for a well-dressed gentleman such as Zacchaeus. He was willing to be thought odd rather than miss the opportunity of a fleeting glimpse of the Man he so much wanted to see. It is likely that the tree Zacchaeus climbed was on the western outskirts of the city (see on Mark 10:46) rather than in one of the narrow city streets (see on Luke 19:3).

Sycamore. Gr. *sukomorea*, the sycamore-fig tree, also called the white, or fig, mulberry tree. The name *sukomorea* is believed to have been derived from *sukon*, “fig,” and *morea*, “mulberry tree,” because of the fact that its leaves resembled those of the mulberry tree, and its fruit that of the fig tree. It has low, spreading branches, and makes a fine shade tree. Trees such as this would seldom if ever be found in the narrow streets of ancient cities, but often by the roadside beyond the city gates (see on Mark 10:46). See on Amos 7:14; Luke 17:6.

5. And saw him. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words.

Abide at thy house. This could refer either to an extended rest during the daytime or to spending the night. This is the only recorded occasion on which Jesus invited Himself to anyone’s home. A man of Zacchaeus’ position would certainly have ample facilities for entertaining guests, and Jesus knew that Zacchaeus would not be embarrassed even if the guests were unexpected. We are not told how Jesus recognized Zacchaeus, so as to be able to call him by name. To be sure, it is possible that some of the bystanders told Him, but it is far more probable that this is an instance of supernatural knowledge similar to that illustrated in John 1:47. Jesus knew that He would be more than welcome; Zacchaeus had greatly desired an opportunity to “see Jesus” (Luke 19:3), and he must have felt highly honored and pleased at the privilege of entertaining this great Teacher in his own home. Jesus knew all this, and went to the tax collector’s home for the specific purpose of instructing him in the way of the kingdom (DA 556).

6. Joyfully. Literally, “rejoicing,” from the Gr. *chairō* (see on ch. 1:28).

7. Murmured. Gr. *diagogguzzō*, an emphatic form of *gogguzzō*, also translated “murmured” (see on Matt. 20:11; Luke 5:30). There were no doubt also in the throng many citizens of Jericho who had virtually been robbed by Zacchaeus or by his agents, and consequently considered him a thief.

8. Stood. Apparently Zacchaeus was walking with Jesus, but upon hearing the angry protests of the crowd (v. 7), he turned to face his detractors, and addressed himself to Jesus.

Half of my goods. Willingness to part freely with the wealth he had unjustly acquired was one of the best possible evidences he could have given of his conversion. “No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation” (DA 555). Compare the willing, voluntary undertaking of Zacchaeus with the refusal of the rich young ruler to part with his wealth even when called upon to do so (see on Matt. 19:21, 22). The experience of Zacchaeus was evidence that a rich man could enter the kingdom of heaven (see on Matt. 19:23–26).

The poor. Among the Jews the care of the poor was considered a most important act of piety and applied religion. God had given specific instruction about their care (see Lev. 19:10, 15; 25:35–43; Esther 9:22; Rom. 15:26; see on Matt. 5:3).

By false accusation. Zacchaeus had already begun to make restitution of his ill-gotten gains (see on v. 3). Now he set about making a thorough and systematic attempt to restore all that he had acquired wrongfully. This was more than his worst accusers in the throng, the priests, scribes, and Pharisees, could say of their conduct. The Temple traffic afforded them unlimited opportunity for defrauding all those who came to worship (see on Matt. 21:12).

Restore him fourfold. Where restoration was voluntary, the law of Moses required simply the addition to the principal of one fifth of the amount taken (see Lev. 6:5; Num. 5:7). A fourfold restoration was one of the extreme penalties for deliberate robbery followed by loss of the goods (see Ex. 22:1; see on 2 Sam. 12:6). Ordinarily the amount restored was to be double that taken, if the original property or money was also recovered (Ex. 22:4, 7). The amount Zacchaeus promised to restore was the best of evidence that he had experienced a change of heart.

9. This day. Probably spoken with reference to the decision reflected by the confession and promise of Zacchaeus (v. 8), in view of the transformation that had taken place in his life.

This house. Members of Zacchaeus’ household benefited by the decision he had made.

He also. See ch. 13:16. Jewish society had stricken Zacchaeus out of the book of respectability. It had branded him a “sinner” (see ch. 19:7), and therefore ineligible for the rewards the Jews considered automatically came to all literal descendants of father Abraham. In language all could understand, Jesus now reads him into the book of divine favor. For the Jewish concept of the importance and value of literal descent from Abraham see on Matt. 3:9; John 8:39.

10. The Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

To seek and to save. See on Matt. 1:21; 10:6; Luke 15:6, 9, 20.

That which was lost. See on Matt. 1:21. One might well expect here the phrase “those who were lost,” meaning all sinners. But Jesus came to restore not only man but also all that had been lost by man’s sin. The world itself will be brought once again to Edenic

beauty, inhabited by a sinless race, and all “that which was lost” will be restored in “the times of restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21).

11. As they heard. [*The Nobleman and the Pounds, Luke 19:11–28. Cf. on Matt. 25:14–30; on parables see pp. 203-207.*] These words closely connect the parable of the Pounds with what Jesus said at the home of Zacchaeus (see vs. 9, 10). Thus it was given probably in or near the home of Zacchaeus in Jericho, or possibly a little later at some pause for rest along the way from Jericho to Bethany, a distance of about 15 mi. It was now probably the week before the Passover of A.D. 31. For the background, circumstances, and events immediately preceding the giving of this parable see on Matt. 20:17.

Added and spake. This reflects a typical Hebrew idiom used elsewhere in the NT, an idiom seen best in the original Hebraistic Greek or in the Hebrew itself (Luke 20:11, 12; Acts 12:3; etc.; see also Gen. 4:2; 8:12; 25:1; Job 29:1).

Nigh to Jerusalem. In spite of all that Jesus had told them about His going up to Jerusalem to die (see on Matt. 16:21; 20:17–19; Mark 9:31; Luke 18:31), the disciples still fondly believed that He was to be acclaimed king of Israel and that He would accept the throne of David. This false hope had led to repeated arguments among them as to who would be first in the kingdom (see on Mark 9:33–40; Matt. 20:20). A year earlier a popular attempt had been made in Galilee to crown Jesus king (see on Matt. 14:22; Mark 6:42; John 6:15; DA 377, 378). Popular sentiment increasingly favored such a course, and the disciples now no doubt encouraged the proposal as they had upon that earlier occasion. The basis for this mistaken concept of Christ’s objectives was the false Messianic hope disseminated by the rabbis, which was, in turn, based on a false interpretation of the Messianic prophecies of the OT (Vol. IV, pp. 26-34; see on Luke 4:19; cf. Rom. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:14–16).

Because they thought. The false concept of the Messianic kingdom, treasured alike by Jesus’ disciples and by their fellow countrymen generally, provided the occasion for the narration of this parable. The disciples confidently expected that the kingdom would be set up at the time of the coming Passover season. The Passover commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and, more than any other national festival, marked the birth of the Hebrew nation.

The kingdom of God. For the true nature of Christ’s kingdom see on Matt. 3:2, 3; 4:17; 5:2; for the false concept of it see on Luke 4:19. Each of Christ’s parables was spoken to illustrate some particular truth related to His kingdom, most frequently with respect to the kingdom of divine grace in the hearts of men, but also, as here, with respect to the establishment of the kingdom of glory.

Immediately appear. Every step in the direction of Jerusalem increased the excitement of the disciples. They were now not more than 15 mi. (24 km.) distant from it. Probably they considered themselves on the triumphal march up to Jerusalem to take possession of the kingdom and to place their Master upon the throne of Israel. Various remarks Jesus had recently made they interpreted as conclusive evidence that this was to be so (see on ch. 18:31).

12. A certain nobleman. Obviously, Jesus here represents Himself. There is a striking similarity between this parable, commonly known as the parable of the Pounds, and that of the Talents recorded in Matt. 25:14–30. There are, as well, equally striking dissimilarities. Some have proposed that these are two variant accounts of the same

original story, but the dissimilarities of the parables themselves and the circumstances under which they were given make this conclusion impossible for one who believes in the inspiration of the Bible writers (see on Matt. 25:14). For the similarity of the two parables see comment on the parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14–30). The comment here in Luke deals, for the most part, with aspects of the parable of the Pounds that differ from those of the parable of the Talents.

Went into a far country. Possibly Jesus based this parable on one or more historical incidents with which His hearers were thoroughly familiar (see on ch. 15:4). The first incident suggested as a possibility is a journey made by Herod the Great to Rome in 40 B.C. to oppose the claims of Antigonus and to have himself appointed king of Judea. The Roman Senate dismissed Antigonus' claims and confirmed Herod as king (Josephus *Antiquities* xiv. 14. 1–5 [370–389]; *War* i. 14. 2–4 [279–285]). But an even closer parallel to the parable is found in the second incident often suggested as a historical basis for the parable. This is the journey to Rome made by Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, who went there to secure confirmation of his father's bequest to him of the kingdom of Judea. His right to the royal title was denied by Augustus Caesar (Josephus *Antiquities* xvii. 8. 1; 9. 3; 11. 4; *War* ii. 1. 1 [1–3]; 6. 1–3 [80–97]).

And to return. See on Matt. 20:14.

13. His ten servants. Or, “ten servants of his.” The “servants” here represent the disciples and all Christians, to whom Christ has entrusted His interests here on earth during His absence in the “far country” (see on Matt. 16:19). There is no particular significance in the number “ten,” which Jesus commonly used as a round number (see on Luke 15:8).

Pounds. Gr. *mnai*, a word derived from the Heb. *maneh*, “mina” (see Vol. I, pp. 163, 167). In the time of Christ the *mna*, “pound,” was 11.46 oz. troy, or 356.4 g., 1/60 of a silver talent, worth 100 drachmas (p. 49; see on ch. 15:8). The purchasing value of that amount of silver would, of course, be far greater than today, for one mina was the equivalent of 100 days' wages (see on Matt. 20:2). Each servant received one “pound.” Compare the talents in the parable of the Talents (see on Matt. 25:15).

Occupy till I come. The word “occupy” here means to carry on trade (see Luke 19:15; cf. Eze. 27:9, 16, 19, 21, 22). The amount of \$10.37 seems very small for a “nobleman” to assign to one of his “servants” as capital. Even the “lord” refers to it, upon his return, as “a very little” (Luke 19:17). However, this was a means of testing the ability of each servant, with the objective of assigning him more important responsibilities later on. The words “till I come” indicate that the nobleman anticipated being away for an indefinite period of time. By these words Jesus implies that He, too, will remain away for a consideration period of time before He returns to reward His faithful ones.

14. His citizens hated him. In the application of the parable to the kingdom of heaven (v. 11), the nobleman represents Jesus and the “citizens” represent the Jews. Jewish hatred of Jesus was wholly without cause (see on Ps. 69:4; John 1:11). Concerning the reasons for their hatred see on John 6:60, 61, 66.

We will not. The Jews did not want to accept Christ as their king. When, before Pilate, they declared, “We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15), their rejection of Christ was complete.

15. When he was returned. The parable of the Talents gives the experience of the servants during their master's absence (Matt. 25:16–18), and also mentions that the master's return came "after a long time" (v. 19).

He commanded these servants. Matthew adds that the master's purpose in calling them was to reckon accounts. The nobleman desired to know how the servants had proved themselves as administrators of his property, and planned to assign them responsibilities as officers in his kingdom, each according to the ability he had demonstrated.

16. The first. Compare Matt. 25:20. The experiences of but three of the ten servants are here related, as samples of varying degrees of success. The first had much to report, the second some to report, and the third nothing to report. In the parable of the Talents there were but three servants to begin with, and all three were called to render account.

Thy pound. Each of the servants recognizes that the "pound" entrusted to him is still his master's property.

Gained ten pounds. Literally, "worked in addition ten minas," or "gained in addition ten minas." The gain was 1,000 per cent of the capital invested. The capital being 100 days' wages, the profit was 1,000 days' wages. This first servant now had a total of 11 minas, more than 3.5 years' pay (see on v. 13). The first servant had demonstrated unusual skill in his business ventures, and this reflected his devotion to his master and his diligence and fidelity in his activities.

17. Thou good servant. The servant in the parable of the Talents is called "faithful" as well as good (see Matt. 25:21). Probably no difference is intended, for the "lord" here proceeds immediately to give this first servant credit for being faithful "in a very little." For comment see on Matt. 25:21.

Authority over ten cities. The administrative skill the first servant had demonstrated gave evidence that he could be trusted with the affairs of a small province of his lord's kingdom. He was not retired and pensioned, nor was he given any material reward. Rather, his reward consisted in greater responsibility and in promotion to a higher position, and no doubt higher rank. He was eminently successful in the test (see on Luke 19:13; see also on Matt. 25:21).

18. Five pounds. Or a profit of 500 per cent (see on v. 17). The second servant now had altogether six "minas," or about 600 days', or about two years', wages.

19. Over five cities. His promotion was proportionate to the ability he had demonstrated (see on v. 17).

20. Another came. That is, another one of the ten (Luke 19:13; cf. Matt. 25:24).

Here is thy pound. In the parable of the Talents the third servant said, "Thou hast that is thine" (see on Matt. 25:25).

Kept laid up. He had taken good care of the talent entrusted to him; he had neither lost nor squandered it.

Napkin. Gr. *soudarion*, from the Latin *sudarium*, from the root *sudor*, "sweat." The "napkin" was a sweatcloth or handkerchief of some kind used as part of the personal wardrobe. In the papyri mention is made of a *soudarion* as part of a bride's dowry.

21. I feared thee. The basic cause of the fear of this servant was his own wrong attitude toward his master, who apparently expected every man to do his best, and not one whit less. The servant was obviously lazy. The test that the "nobleman" had given him was one which, if capitalized on, would have led him to overcome these traits.

Austere. Gr. *austēros*, literally, “harsh to the taste,” hence, “harsh,” “severe,” or “rough.” How could the laziness of this servant elicit anything but such a reaction from the master?

Layedst not down. The servant says, in effect, “You would take whatever I earned anyway, and I would have no reward for my efforts. So what is the use of going to all that bother?” The rewards given to the first and second servants are proof that the fault lay with the third servant and not with his master (see on Matt. 25:24).

22. Out of thine own mouth. No further examination of the facts was necessary. The third servant had proved himself utterly unreliable. Those who are forever placing the blame for their lack of success on others thereby clearly announce their own defects of character. They make it obvious that they cannot be trusted with major responsibilities of any kind.

Judge. Or, “condemn” (see on Matt. 7:1).

Thou wicked servant. He had abused his master’s trust and neglected the opportunity provided him to succeed. Those who accomplish nothing with the talents entrusted to them are, in the sight of Heaven, “wicked,” and are certain to reap the reward of the wicked. In the parable of the Talents the third servant is censured for being “slothful” as well as wicked (see on Matt. 25:26).

Thou knewest. The remainder of the verse could be considered as interrogative, “Didst thou know?” This servant’s failure was not due to ignorance, but to laziness. He knew better. He knew that his master would require a strict account of the use made of the opportunity afforded him—and if he knew, why did he not do something about it? This it was clearly in his power to do. Herein lay his guilt.

23. Wherefore then? Since he knew what to expect upon his master’s return, the least he could have done would be to let the money work for him, even if he were unwilling to work himself. Why did he accept the money in the first place unless he intended to do something with it? It might have been given to another servant who would have done something worth while with it.

Bank. Gr. *trapeza*, “a table”; here referring to the table of a money-changer, hence “a bank” (see Matt. 21:12; Mark 11:15; John 2:15). Our English word “bank” has a similar origin, being derived from the Italian *banca*, meaning “bench,” “table,” or “counter.” It would have taken little effort on the servant’s part to take the money to one of the money lenders in the city. Hence, not only did his conduct mark him as foolish and lazy; it appeared that he had deliberately planned to deprive his master of a rightful profit (see on Matt. 25:27).

Usury. That is, “interest.” The modern connotation of exorbitant interest is not here intended. For the teachings of the Bible with respect to charging interest for money lent, see on Ex. 22:25.

24. Them that stood by. Probably some of the nobleman’s attendants, other than the servants. To “stand” by, or before, a superior meant to be in his service (see 1 Kings 10:8; see on Dan. 1:19).

Take from him. Apparently no punishment was inflicted except the negative punishment of being required to return the unimproved capital entrusted to him (see on v. 26).

Give it to him. The unimproved talent was given to the first servant, not so much as a reward as that he had given evidence that he would accomplish more with it than others. It was simply good business on the part of the nobleman to place his money and affairs in the hands of those who would make the most of the opportunities thus afforded them. The first servant now had altogether 12 minas. This was twice as much as the second servant now had. Apparently the king did not require the return of either principal or interest, but left it in the hands of these men to continue working and improving it (cf. Matt. 25:28).

25. They said unto him. It is not altogether clear whether “they” are the attendants of the nobleman (see on v. 24) protesting to him, or those who listened to the narration of the parable protesting to Jesus Himself. In the latter case this entire verse (v. 25) would be in the nature of a parenthesis.

26. Unto every one. For comment on the principle here stated in the form of a paradox see on Matt. 13:12; 25:27. This is the nobleman’s explanation of his reason for giving the unimproved “pound” to the man who already had more than any of his fellow servants.

Taken away from him. Here the lazy servant is simply deprived of the capital that had been entrusted to him. His counterpart in the parable of the Talents was severely punished as well (see on Matt. 25:30).

27. Those mine enemies. That is, those who had rebelled in the absence of the nobleman, and who had sought to prevent him from receiving his kingdom (see on v. 14).

Slay. Gr. *katasphazō*, “to slaughter.” Apparently those who had opposed the nobleman had not reformed. They were still opposed to his rule, and the only way to safeguard the peace and security of the realm was to dispose of them once and for all.

28. Ascending. That is, from Jericho in the Jordan valley (see on v. 11). In about 15 mi. (24 km.) they climbed 3,300 ft. (1,500 m.) (see on ch. 10:30). The quick transition of Luke’s record here seems to allow but a little time interval between the incidents in Jericho (vs. 1–28) and the Triumphal Entry (vs. 29–44).

29. It came to pass. [*The Triumphal Entry, Luke 19:29–44=Matt. 21:1–11=Mark 11:1–11=John 12:12–19.* Major comment: Matthew.] Only Luke narrates the climax of the Triumphal Entry, which came at the crest of the Mount of Olives (vs. 41–44).

33. The owners. Only Luke notes that it was the owners of the ass and the colt (see Matt. 21:2) who challenged the two disciples sent to procure them.

37. Come nigh. That is, to the descent toward Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives.

The descent. That is, downward into the Kidron Valley, on the farther side of which Jerusalem was situated.

Rejoice and praise God. Ps. 122 was a favorite for the use of pilgrims as the towers of the city of Jerusalem came into view, and its words were appropriate indeed: “Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem” (Ps. 122:2, 7; see DA 76). This occasion, when those who accompanied Jesus thought He was soon to be crowned king of Israel, was no doubt marked by unprecedented rejoicing.

38. Peace in heaven. Compare ch. 2:14.

39. Some of the Pharisees. Only the night before, the leaders of Israel had taken counsel together to kill Jesus. Judas then met with them for the first time, angered by the implied rebuke he had received at the home of Simon in Bethany (DA 558, 563, 564; see on Matt. 21:1). For vast multitudes to forsake the Temple service in favor of a glimpse of Jesus (DA 571), especially with the Passover season at hand, was an ominous portent of

the waning power of the nation's religious leaders, who now feared that Jesus would permit the multitude to crown Him king (DA 572).

Master. Or, "teacher," a term used in addressing Jesus, even by His enemies. The leaders refused to admit what the common people believed, that Jesus was at least a "prophet" (cf. Matt. 21:11). The term "teacher" implied no recognition of divine power or authority.

41. He was come near. That is, in sight of the city of Jerusalem, which lay to the west across the narrow Kidron Valley.

Beheld the city. From the crest of the Mount of Olives (GC 17) the entire city, including the Temple, could be seen. The Mount of Olives was about 300 ft. higher than the Temple. Calvary was also visible, not far from the Sheep Gate, which was near the northeast corner of the city (DA 576). The resplendent beauty of the Temple, its white marble and gilded domes glistening in the reflected light of the late afternoon sun, must have been an inspiring sight indeed to the Jews (see DA 575). Pride and joy naturally filled the hearts of all true sons and daughters of Israel upon catching the first glimpse of the Holy City. But here Jesus wept audibly, for He could see what the multitude could not see, the awful fate of Jerusalem at the hands of Roman armies, less than 40 years later.

42. The things. That is, the things that leaders and people needed to know in order to avert calamity and assure peace and prosperity. These "things" were the requirements God expected the Jews to fulfill so that He could fully honor them as a nation and make them His representatives to the nations of earth. For an outline of the glorious destiny God had marked out for Israel see Vol. IV, pp. 26-30. On the one hand Jesus saw clearly what might have been, and on the other, what was to be (see DA 576).

Now they are hid. That is, they were not to be realized.

43. The days shall come. With divine foresight Jesus' eye pierces the future and sees the armies of Rome surrounding the city of Jerusalem and laying it desolate. He subsequently discussed briefly the future of Jerusalem with some of His disciples two days later on the western slope of the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:3; see on Matt. 24:15-20).

Thine enemies. In this case, the Romans (see on ch. 21:20).

Trench. Gr. *charax*, "a stake," "a palisade," or "a rampart." Josephus (*War* vi. 2; ix. 2; xi. 4 to xii. 2 [262-265; 356, 357; 466-511]) describes in detail the fulfillment of this prophecy. In laying siege to Jerusalem, the Romans at first built timbered earthworks, but when the Jews destroyed them the Romans replaced them with a wall.

Compass thee round. The Romans surrounded Jerusalem and starved it into submission. When famine reached the point of driving the inhabitants into panic, Roman legions stormed the city and took it.

44. Even with the ground. See on Matt. 24:2.

One stone upon another. Probably here a hyperbolic figure of speech indicating complete destruction.

Visitation. See on Ps. 8:4; 59:5. That is, for the sins of the nation, particularly their rejection of the messengers of mercy God had sent them from time to time (see on Matt. 23:34, 35). Retribution for all these crimes was to "come upon this generation" (see on Matt. 23:36, 37; Luke 19:41).

45. Went into the temple. [*Second Cleansing of the Temple, Luke 19:45-48=Matt. 21:12-17=Mark 11:15-19. Major comment: Matthew.*]

Therein, and them that bought. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words. See on Matt. 21:12.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1, 2 DA 552
- 1–10 DA 552–556
- 3 DA 553
- 5 COL 236
- 5–7 DA 554
- 8 5T 339
- 8–10 DA 555
- 9 DA 556
- 10 AA 467; CSW 69; CT 29; Ev 462; FE 183, 199, 206; LS 246; MH 105, 448; ML 300; MM 301; 2T 27, 224, 467; 3T 49; 4T 377; 5T 603; 8T 310
- 13 CS 116; CT 309; FE 229; 2T 668; 3T 386
- 14 PK 140; TM 467
- 16 CS 111; 9T 58
- 16–20 2T 285
- 20 CS 125; FE 83; 3T 57; 5T 465; 6T 434; 8T 55
- 20–23 CS 40
- 29–44 DA 569–579
- 37–40 EW 109; TM 104
- 39, 40 DA 572
- 40 CW 38; EW 244; GC 404; SR 373; 1T 57; 5T 462; 8T 55
- 41 DA 575, 577, 587; GC 18, 21; 1T 505; 4T 191; 5T 72, 258, 346; 8T 32
- 42 COL 302; DA 576; TM 410; 4T 187; 5T 73, 76, 77, 258
- 42–44 DA 577; GC 17
- 44 COL 302; DA 235, 626; GC 315, 316; LS 412; TM 402; 4T 187, 191; 5T 72; 6T 315, 426; 9T 97
- 45–48 DA 589–592

CHAPTER 20

1 *Christ avoucheth his authority by a question of John's baptism.* 9 *The parable of the vineyard.* 19 *Of giving tribute to Cæsar.* 27 *He convinceth the Sadducees that denied the resurrection.* 41 *How Christ is the son of David.* 45 *He warneth his disciples to beware of the scribes.*

1. It came to pass. [*The Leaders Challenge Jesus' Authority, Luke 20:1–8=Matt. 21:23–27=Mark 11:27–33. Major comment: Matthew.*]

6. Stone us. That is, stone us to death.

7. Could not tell. Literally, “did not know.”

9. A certain man. [*The Wicked Husbandmen, Luke 20:9–19=Matt. 21:33–46=Mark 12:1–12. Major comment: Matthew.*]

For a long time. A detail noted only by Luke.

11. Again he sent another. Literally, “he added to send another,” a strictly Hebrew idiom carried over into the Greek (see on ch. 19:11).

12. Wounded. Gr. *traumatizō*, from the noun *trauma* (see on ch. 10:34).

13. What shall I do? Another detail preserved only by Luke.

16. God forbid. Literally, “may it not happen,” meaning, as it were, “away with the thought.” The word “God” does not appear in the Greek. This strong exclamation was uttered when the Pharisees recognized in the parable a picture of their own fate (see COL 295).

18. Grind him to powder. Or, “crush him to pieces.”

19. Chief priests. For comment see on Matt. 21:23.

The same hour. They were ready to force the issue with Jesus (see Matt. 21:46).

They perceived. Here was the reason for their immediate anger.

20. Watched. [*Paying Tribute to Caesar, Luke 20:20–26=Matt. 22:15–22=Mark 12:13–17.* Major comment: Matthew.]

Spies. Probably these were, in this case, theological students from the seminary in Jerusalem (see DA 601). For previous encounters between Jesus and spies commissioned by the Sanhedrin see on ch. 11:54.

Feign. Or, “pretend.”

Take hold of his words. They were “watching” for something that would hold in court, so that Jesus would not be able to escape their sinister designs against His life.

22. Tribute. Gr. *phoros*, the annual fixed tax, levied either on property or on persons.

24. A penny. A Roman denarius (see p. 49; see on Matt. 20:2).

26. Could not take hold. They were unable to find a word of evidence against Jesus (see on v. 20). He slipped through their hands, and as He did so, He uttered the fundamental principle that governs the Christian’s responsibilities to civil authorities.

27. Certain of the Sadducees. [*Marriage and the Resurrection, Luke 20:27–38=Matt. 22:23–33=Mark 12:18–27.* Major comment: Matthew.]

35. To obtain. That is, “to reach,” or “to attain to.”

36. Children of the resurrection. A Hebrew idiomatic expression carried over into the Greek, and here parallel with the expression “the children of God.” “Children of the resurrection” means, simply, those raised from the dead. They have been given life again by the same power that originally gave them life. Their entire being has been reconstituted for life in a new world.

39. Certain of the scribes. [*The Great Commandment, Luke 20:39, 40=Matt. 22:34–40=Mark 12:28–34.* Major comment: Mark.]

41. He said unto them. [*Jesus Silences His Critics, Luke 20:41–44=Matt. 22:41–46=Mark 12:35–37.* Major comment: Matthew.]

42. In the book of Psalms. Only Luke remarks that the quotation is from the book of Psalms.

45. In the audience. [*Woes Upon Scribe and Pharisee, Luke 20:45–47=Matt. 23:1–39=Mark 12:38–40.* Major comment: Matthew.] That is, “in the hearing”; in other words, while the scribes and the Pharisees were listening to Him.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–19DA 593–600

20–22DA 601

20–47DA 601–609

21 DA 602

22–25DA 725

23–25DA 602

35, 36 GC 482; MM 101

CHAPTER 21

5

1 *Christ commendeth the poor widow. 5 He foretelleth the destruction of the temple, and of the city Jerusalem: 25 the signs also which shall be before the last day. 34 He exhorteth them to be watchful.*

1. He looked up. [*The Widow's Mites, Luke 21:1-4=Mark 12:41-44. Major comment: Mark.*]

5. Some spake of the temple. [*Signs of Christ's Return, Luke 21:5-38=Matt. 24:1-51=Mark 13:1-37. Major comment: Matthew.*]

Gifts. Probably "gifts" made to beautify the Temple, such as the golden vine of Herod at its entrance (Josephus *Antiquities* xv. 11. 3 cf. DA 575).

7. Shall come to pass. Literally, "are about to become [happen]."

9. By and by. Gr. *eutheōs*, "immediately," or "at once." The English expression "by and by" formerly had this meaning, but today has precisely the opposite meaning (see on ch. 17:7). Thus Jesus actually said, "the end is not at once."

12. Before all these. Luke here includes (vs. 12-16) a portion of the Olivet discourse not given by Matthew, probably because the latter had already reported practically the same line of thought, almost in the same words, from an earlier discourse. For comment on vs. 12-16 see on Matt. 10:17-21.

13. It shall turn to you. See on Mark 13:9.

14. Meditate. Gr. *promēletaō*, "to practice beforehand." This probably refers to the going over of a speech beforehand in order that upon delivery the speaker might be more familiar with it. In making their defense before "kings and rulers" the disciples were not to have set speeches they could deliver by rote. For the reason back of Christ's admonition see on Matt. 10:19, 20.

18. Not an hair. This promise is not a universal guarantee of immunity from martyrdom, for Jesus had just said that some would be put to death (see v. 16). Perhaps it means here that rulers who hale Christians into court will have no power over them except when God shall permit (see John 19:11; Acts 5:35-38). Or, Christ's words may be intended to refer to the ultimate result rather than to the immediate prospects of this world, and mean that the rulers of earth can have no power whatever over one's eternal welfare (see John 10:28, 29; see on Matt. 10:28, 30).

19. In your patience. Compare Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:13. The RSV reads, "By your endurance you will gain your lives," a thought similar to that of Matt. 24:13.

20. Compassed with armies. That is, encircled by the Roman legions. For comment see on Matt. 24:2, 15-20.

Desolation thereof. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 meant "the end" of the Jewish nation as such (see on Matt. 24:14, 15).

⁵Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Lk 16:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

21. Countries. That is, the country in contrast with the city. “Them which are in the midst of it [Jerusalem; see v. 20]” are city residents, and “them that are in the countries,” residents of the rural districts, living in the smaller towns and villages.

22. Days of vengeance. See on Matt. 23:35, 36.

Which are written. Evidently a reference to the curses for disobedience (see Deut. 27:11–26; 28:15–68).

23. Wrath upon this people. That is, upon the Jews. See on Matt. 23:35; cf. Jer. 5:29. For a full discussion of God’s plan for Israel, and of their failure and rejection as a nation, see Vol. IV, pp. 26-30.

24. Edge of the sword. Literally, “mouth of the sword.” Obviously this refers to the bloody climax of the siege of Jerusalem in the year A.D. 70 (see pp. 70-77; see on Matt. 24:2, 15–20).

Led away captive. As Moses had predicted, if Israel would “not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book” (Deut. 28:58, 63–68). This warning had already been fulfilled previously, in the Babylonian captivity (Jer. 16:13; 40:1, 2; 52:12–16, 28–31; Dan. 1:1–3; 9:11–14; etc.). In connection with Gabriel’s explanation to Daniel concerning the eventual restoration from Babylonian captivity (see on Dan. 9:24, 25), there was also coupled a warning that repetition of the mistakes that occasioned the Babylonian captivity would result in a second destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (see on Dan. 9:26, 27). It was to this second destruction and the scattering of the Jews that Christ here refers (see on Matt. 24:15–20; cf. Luke 21:20). This situation was not to be remedied “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” For further comment see Vol. IV, pp. 30-36.

Trodden down. The semblance of autonomy the Jews enjoyed under Roman jurisdiction prior to A.D. 70 was never restored, and ever since that fateful year Jerusalem has remained largely, if not entirely, under Gentile control. As a result of the revolt under Bar Cocheba, crushed in A.D. 135, all Jews were forbidden to enter the city on pain of death. Never since that time has Jerusalem been a truly Jewish city. The Temple was never rebuilt after A.D. 70. Among others, Romans, Saracens, Norsemen, Turks, Crusaders, and Arabs have controlled the city and the former Temple area. Though recently the new State of Israel has secured control of a portion of the city, Old Jerusalem is still not a Jewish city, and the former Temple area remains in non-Jewish hands. See pp. 78, 79.

Times of the Gentiles. The time allotted the Jewish nation would soon end, and they would be God’s chosen people no more. Upon their rejection as a nation the gospel was to go to all nations (see Acts 1:8; 13:46; 18:6; 28:25–28; Rom. 1:16). For a further discussion of the role of the Jews as God’s chosen people, of their apostasy, and of the Gentiles replacing the Jews, see Vol. IV, pp. 26-36.

25. Signs. See on Matt. 24:29.

With perplexity. The Greek implies that the “perplexity” is due to “the sea and the waves roaring.” The last part of v. 25 reads literally, “and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity [at] the roaring of the sea and the waves.”

The sea. Christ here associates manifestations of the destructive forces of nature with signs in the heavens immediately preceding His return to earth in power and glory.

26. Men’s hearts Literally, “men expiring from fear,” or “men fainting from fear.” The latter part of the verse gives as the climactic reason for men’s hearts failing

them for fear, the shaking of “the powers of heaven.” The scene here depicted takes place under the seventh plague (EW 41; GC 636). Upon this scene “the wicked look with terror and amazement” (GC 636), calling for the mountains and the rocks to fall upon them (Rev. 6:14–17).

29. All the trees. Luke informs readers unfamiliar with the fig tree that the truth thus illustrated applies to all trees, not to the fig only.

31. The kingdom of God. That is, the kingdom of glory in contrast with the kingdom of divine grace (see on Matt. 4:17; 5:2).

34. Surfeiting. Gr. *kraipalē*, “intoxication,” or “a drunken headache,” from *kras*, “head,” and *pallō*, “to sway,” or “to toss about.” Greek medical writers used *kraipalē* in reference to the nausea and stupor following a drunken debauch.

Cares. That is, “anxieties,” “worries.”

35. Snare. See 1 Thess. 5:4; 1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26.

36. Watch. Gr. *agrupneō*, “to be sleepless,” literally, “keep awake.”

Pray always. See on ch. 18:1.

Accounted worthy to escape. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for reading “prevail to escape,” or “have strength to escape.”

Stand before. See on ch. 19:24. This is the supreme goal of the Christian life.

37. In the day time. A summary statement, in retrospect, upon Jesus’ activities during the first three days of the passion week (see on Matt. 23:38).

At night. Sunday and Monday nights Jesus had returned to Bethany (see on Mark 11:11, 12, 20; see also DA 581). This night, Tuesday, Jesus and the disciples probably spent on the Mount of Olives.

38. All the people. This is probably a summary statement also, comparable with that of v. 37. Jesus did not teach in the Temple after this time.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 DA 615, 616; GW 467

5–38 DA 627–636

12 AA 84

14, 15 AA 97

15 2T 485

16 AA 84; DA 629; PK 588; 5T 473, 691; 9T 231

16, 17 GC 28, 54, 267; SR 331

18 DA 630, 634

19 Ev 631; 2T 320, 424

20 GC 26; 5T 451, 464

20, 21 GC 30; PP 166

20–22 DA 630

25 GC 37, 304

25, 26 Ev 18; 1T 268

26 EW 41; 4T 53

28 DA 632; Ev 18; GC 308; LS 272

30, 31 GC 308

31 DA 234, 634

33–36 9T 268

34 COL 55, 319; DA 234, 636; GC 309, 626; TM 238; 1T 168, 469; 2T 283; 4T 31, 309;
 5T 152, 235, 259, 280, 461; 6T 410
 34, 35 CT 368
 34–36CW 24; PP 166; 4T 306; 5T 100
 35 FE 335; 6T 129
 36 DA 234, 636; GC 309, 544; ML 17; TM 508; 5T 235

CHAPTER 22

1 *The Jews conspire against Christ.* 3 *Satan prepareth Judas to betray him.* 7 *The apostles prepare the passover.* 19 *Christ instituteth his holy supper,* 21 *covertly foretelleth of the traitor,* 24 *dehorteth the rest of his apostles from ambition,* 31 *assureth Peter his faith should not fail: 34 and yet he should deny him thrice.* 39 *He prayeth in the mount, and sweateth blood,* 47 *is betrayed with a kiss: 50 he healeth Malchus' ear,* 54 *he is thrice denied of Peter,* 63 *shamefully abused,* 66 *and confesseth himself to be the Son of God.*

1. The feast. [*The Betrayal Plot, Luke 22:1–6=Matt. 26:1–5, 14–16=Mark 14:1, 2, 10, 11=John 12:10, 11.* Major comment: Matthew.]

3. Then entered Satan. The action of Judas was no surprise to Jesus (see John 6:64, 70, 71). This was Judas' first contact with the Jewish leaders for the purpose of betraying his Master (see on Matt. 26:14). John makes the same observation concerning the experience of Judas at the time of his third and final contact with the Jewish leaders, on the night of the betrayal (ch. 13:2, 27).

Surnamed. Literally, “called.”

4. Captains. The more complete title was “captains of the temple” (v. 52). These were evidently the leaders of the Temple guards.

6. In the absence. See on Matt. 26:15, 16.

7. Then came. [*Preparation for the Passover, Luke 22:7–13=Matt. 26:17–19=Mark 14:12–16.* Major comment: Matthew.]

8. Peter and John. Only Luke identifies the two disciples sent on this errand.

10. When ye are entered. It seems that Peter and John were to find at or near the city gate, the man designated.

14. The hour. [*Celebration of the Passover, Luke 22:14–16=Matt. 26:20=Mark 14:17.* Major comment: Luke. See Crucifixion In Relation To Passover, Passion Week, Jesus' Resurrection to Ascension.] That is, the hour for the Passover meal, preparation for which is related in vs. 7–13. This was Thursday night. Note that Jesus instituted the Christian ordinance of the Lord's Supper during the course of the regular Passover meal (see Additional Notes on Matt. 26, Note 1).

Sat down. Rather, “reclined.” For a description of the arrangement of the table and couches at an ancient Oriental feast see on Mark 2:15. At the first Passover meal the participants were to stand as they ate, ready to take their departure from Egypt. After entering the Promised Land, however, ever, they no longer stood, but sat or reclined. Whereas upon the first Passover their standing posture indicated their haste to depart, the reclining posture now indicated composure and security in the land promised to them.

Twelve apostles. This proved to be the last occasion on which all the Twelve were together in one place. Custom required that there be at least 10 but not more than 30 present to eat the Passover meal together. There were 13 present upon this occasion.

15. With desire. The expression “with desire I have desired” is a characteristic Hebraistic idiom meaning “I have very much desired.” Similar idiomatic expressions

appear in John 3:29 (“rejoiceth greatly”), Acts 4:17 (“straitly threaten”), and elsewhere in the NT. They are very common in the LXX. This was the last occasion on which Jesus would be together with His beloved disciples before the agony of betrayal, trial, and crucifixion. This, the climax of His earthly ministry, had ever been before Him as He labored among men. For nearly a year Jesus had diligently been seeking to prepare His followers for the events of these final hours of His life (see on Matt. 16:21; 20:17; etc.).

This passover. The fourth Passover of Jesus’ ministry (see pp. 193, 247; The Duration of Christ’s Ministry), the third celebrated with the disciples in Jerusalem. Not all of them, however, had been present as members of this group upon either of the previous occasions—the Passovers of A.D. 28 and 29—which occurred prior to the selection and appointment of the Twelve in the summer of A.D. 29. It was definitely the Passover meal that Jesus and the Twelve now celebrated together on this occasion (see Additional Notes on Matt. 26, Note 1; DA 642, 652; GC 399).

Before I suffer. Again and again Jesus had spoken to the disciples of His sufferings (see on Matt. 16:21; 20:17). The OT prophets often spoke of the sufferings of Messiah (see Ps. 22; Isa. 53; etc.). Jesus must tread the pathway of suffering all the way to the cross in order to qualify as the “captain” of our salvation (see Heb. 2:10). Without the cross there could be no crown (see 1 Peter 1:11). It is our privilege, as followers of the lowly Jesus, to have a share in His sufferings (see 2 Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:10; 1 Peter 4:13; DA 225).

16. Not any more. This was the last Passover season in which followers of Christ might meaningfully participate. The rent veil in the Temple at the moment of Christ’s death upon the cross (see on Matt. 27:51) was Heaven’s sign that the symbols of the Jewish religious system became obsolete when Christ, to whom all these things pointed (see Col. 2:17), gave His life a ransom for many. Jesus was about to replace the symbols of the dead past with the living symbols of His own body and His shed blood (see Luke 22:19, 20; DA 652).

Eat thereof. Literally, “eat it,” that is, the “passover” (see v. 15).

Fulfilled. The final and complete celebration of deliverance from sin was to take place in the kingdom of “glory,” concerning which Christ had already told the disciples (see on Matt. 25:31). This statement by Jesus is probably a reference to “the marriage supper of the Lamb” (see Rev. 19:7–9), held in commemoration of the fact that “the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (see vs. 1–6). For comments on a solemn religious feast as a symbol of the happiness of the saved in the eternal kingdom see on Luke 14:15, 16.

Kingdom of God. See on Matt. 25:31.

17. Divide it. [*The Lord’s Supper*, Luke 22:17–20=Matt. 26:26–29=Mark 14:22–25. Major comment: Matthew.] That is, by drinking in turn from the same cup, as it was passed from one to another.

20. Likewise. This refers to the taking of, the giving thanks for, and the distributing of the wine.

21. The hand. [*The Betrayer Revealed*, Luke 22:21–23=Matt. 26:21–25=Mark 14:18–21=John 13:21–30. Major comment: Matthew and John.] Luke relates the narrative of the Lord’s Supper before that of Judas as the betrayer, whereas Matthew and Mark reverse this order. Luke’s account is in chronological order (see on Matt. 26:21).

Him that betrayeth. Literally, “who is betraying.” Judas had already met with the Jewish leaders and had agreed to betray Jesus to them (see on Matt. 26:14, 15). The betrayal was already in progress.

With me on the table. The hands of all the disciples were probably “on the table,” so to speak. This statement did not identify Judas as the betrayer, but simply affirmed that the betrayer was one of those reclining about the table.

24. Strife. [*Washing the Disciples’ Feet*, Luke 22:24–30=John 13:1–20. Major comment: John.] Literally, “contention,” implying a combative spirit and eagerness to contend. This undercurrent of discord seems to have been going on all during the Passover meal. The account in Luke explains the occasion that gave birth to the ordinance of humility, recorded by John. In view of events so soon to occur, it was tragic that the disciples should have been arguing about rank in an imaginary kingdom that Christ did not come to establish. Basically it was the disciples’ misconception of the nature of Christ’s kingdom that, as upon previous occasions (see Matt. 18:1; 20:21; Mark 9:33–35; Luke 9:46–48), had given rise to the argument of relative greatness. Concerning the false concepts entertained by the Jews, and to some extent by the disciples even after the resurrection, about the nature of the Messianic kingdom, see on ch. 24:19. Judas had grasped for himself one place of honor, on Jesus’ left, and John was on His right (DA 644).

The greatest. For comment see on Matt. 18:1–10; Matt. 20:25, 26. The disciples were thinking of their rank in the kingdom they thought Christ was about to establish on earth.

25. Exercise lordship. See on Matt. 20:25, 26.

Benefactors. Literally, “doers of good.”

26. He that is greatest. See on Matt. 20:26.

The younger. In Oriental home life the younger brothers are accustomed to defer to their older brothers. Thus Christ said, in other words, Let the “greatest” take a position of submission.

Chief. Or, “leader.”

27. As he that serveth. Jesus points to His own selfless example of service for others. The same spirit that moved Christ to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of mankind should motivate the lives of all who would be His disciples.

28. Continued. These words convey the idea of persistent and consistent loyalty. In spite of their obvious imperfections the disciples had, on the whole, been loyal in their devotion to Christ.

Temptations. Or, “trials” (see on Matt. 6:13).

29. I appoint unto you. This was to be the reward for their loyalty (see Rev. 3:21; 22:12; cf. Luke 12:32; 2 Tim. 2:12; see on Luke 19:17).

30. Eat and drink. For comment see on Matt. 8:11; Luke 14:15; cf. Matt. 19:28.

Sit on thrones. See on Matt. 19:28.

31. Simon, Simon. [*A Warning to Peter and the Ten*, Luke 22:31–38=Matt. 26:31–35=Mark 14:27–31. Cf. on John 13:36–38. Major comment: Matthew.] Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of the words, “and the Lord said.” The repetition of “Simon” lends emphasis to what Jesus is about to say.

Satan hath desired. He already had Judas (see Job 1:12; 2:6).

You. Plural in the Greek text. Jesus is addressing Peter, but His words are for all the disciples.

32. I have prayed. What a comfort to know that the Master takes so personal an interest in the problems and temptations of us as individuals! Not long after this conversation Jesus lifted His voice to the Father in prayer. His disciples—all of them—were the burden of that prayer (see John 17:2, 9, 15, 17).

Thee. In contrast with the word “you” (see on v. 31), the word “thee” is in the singular, so emphasizing the personal nature of Jesus’ interest in each of His followers—here, in Peter particularly.

Fail. Gr. *ekleipō*, “to leave out,” or “to fail,” which expresses the idea of failing completely. Our English word “eclipse” is from *ekleipō*.

Converted. Gr. *epistrephō*, “to turn,” or “to return,” hence, “to reform.” Jesus implies that Peter will, indeed, fall away. But that is not the end of the story, for he will “turn again.” The bitter experience through which Peter was about to pass, as a result of denying his Lord, wrought in him a transformation clearly evident to his fellow disciples (see DA 713, 812).

Strengthen thy brethren. Peter’s boldness for truth testifies to the thoroughness of his conversion and also to the way in which his ministry proved of strength and courage to the believers in and about Jerusalem (see Acts 2:14; 3:12–15; 4:8–13; 5:29–33; etc.).

33. Ready to go. See on Matt. 26:33, 35.

34. Peter. Jesus here addresses Peter by the name He Himself had given (see on John 1:42).

35. When I sent you. Jesus reminds the Twelve of the time He had sent them forth two by two, through the towns of Galilee (see on Matt. 10:1, 5, 9, 10).

Lacked ye? The Greek form of the question implies that Jesus expected a negative answer. The disciples had been cordially received, for the most part at least. At the time of the evangelistic tour here referred to Jesus was at the height of His popularity in Galilee, and people were only too glad to receive His representatives.

36. But now. The situation has changed. The period of popularity in Galilee had ended a year before (see on John 6:66). Henceforth as the disciples proclaimed the gospel they would encounter suspicion and enmity. They could not expect the gracious and generous hospitality they had formerly enjoyed. Persecution would often prove to be their lot (see on Matt. 10:16–28; John 16:33).

Sword. Gr. *machaira*, usually meaning a short Roman sword (see on ch. 2:35).

Besides its usual meaning, *machaira* is used in the LXX to translate the Heb. *ma’akeleth*, “a slaughtering knife,” from the word *ma’akal*, “food.” Perhaps here the latter meaning, “slaughtering knife,” is meant.

Garment. Gr. *himation*, the “mantle,” or outer garment (see on Matt. 5:40).

Buy one. The apparently figurative language Jesus here uses has often been misunderstood. As the disciples went forth into a hostile world they often found themselves in circumstances in which, from a human viewpoint, weapons would have been most useful. But the entire account of the book of Acts records no instance in which any of the apostles used, or even carried, a weapon. We may be sure that had Christ intended them to do so, they would have. An hour or two later this very night, when Peter essayed to use a sword (see on Matt. 26:51–53), Jesus rebuked his action and made it

clear that the Christian, like his Master, is not to rely on weapons for protection. The Christian is not to repel force with force (see on Matt. 5:39).

We do not defend the life-giving gospel by killing men for whom Christ died. The supreme evidence of Christian love is willingness to die for others (see John 15:13). The desire or intent to take the lives of those who may disagree with us is evidence of the spirit of Satan, who was “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). Persecution is ever the work of the devil, and is perpetrated by men who have surrendered themselves to his control. The only weapon the Christian may feel free to use in his defense of the faith is the “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17; see Heb. 4:12; see on Matt. 26:52). Thus, in view of Christ’s own teachings and of the NT record of apostolic methods of advancing the gospel, we conclude that Christ here speaks figuratively, warning the disciples of the persecution they and their converts were to suffer, not of the literal use of weapons of any kind.

37. Transgressors. Gr. *anomoi*, “transgressors,” literally, “lawless ones.” See Isa. 53:12, which Jesus here quotes.

Have an end. That is, they are fulfilled.

38. Here are two swords. The disciples evidently misunderstood Jesus and proceeded to take literally what He had said about providing swords. The stern rebuke administered to Peter an hour or more later (see on Matt. 26:51, 52), is clear evidence that Jesus did not intend His words to be taken literally.

It is enough. It is not clear whether Jesus here refers to the two swords Peter has just called attention to, or whether He refers to the discussion as a whole. Jesus here probably dismisses the subject, as this was no time to be arguing this particular point. More important matters were at hand. Perhaps Jesus meant, “enough of this [discussion].”

39. As he was wont. [*Retirement to Gethsemane*, Luke 22:39=Matt. 26:30=Mark 14:26. Major comment: Matthew.] Literally, “according to the custom [of Him].”

40. Pray. [*Gethsemane*, Luke 22:40–53=Matt. 26:36–56=Mark 14:32–52=John 18:1–12. Major comment: Matthew.]

Enter not into temptation. For comment see on Matt. 6:13; 26:41.

41. A stone’s cast. Or, “a stone’s throw.” Only Luke notes this detail.

43. An angel. This was Gabriel, who ministered personally to Christ upon repeated occasions (see on ch. 1:19). Compare Jesus’ experience at the close of His encounter with Satan in the wilderness (see on Matt. 4:11).

Strengthening him. After His third season of prayer, and having made the great decision to go all the way to the cross, “Jesus fell dying to the ground from which He had partially risen,” having “tasted the sufferings of death for every man” (DA 693, 694). The mighty angel came to impart strength to Him for the hours of suffering that lay between Him and the cross, and when He had been strengthened, “He came forth calm and serene,” with “no traces of His recent agony” visible upon His face (DA 694). It was thus He met the mob that had come forth to seize Him.

44. Agony. For the nature of this agony see on Matt. 26:38.

Drops. Gr. *thromboi*, “thick drops,” or “clots.” For references to historical instances of persons whose pores have exuded a bloody sweat see *International Critical Commentary*, on Luke 22:44.

Though important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for omitting vs. 43, 44, the weight of evidence favors retaining them.

48. Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

51. Suffer ye thus far. It is not clear from Luke whether Jesus addresses these words to the disciples, instructing them to let events take their course, or commanding them to cease acting with force and violence (see v. 50), or whether He calls upon those who have come to arrest Him to permit the healing of Malchus' ear. According to DA 696, He spoke to the Roman soldiers, who were holding Him securely.

Touched his ear. This was the second evidence of divinity provided those who had come to arrest Jesus, the first being the appearance of angelic glory (see on John 18:6). Had Peter's rash act not been promptly remedied, it might have been presented before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate as evidence that Jesus and His disciples were dangerous men and a threat to the nation. As it was, the authorities made no mention of the incident at the trial because they would have had to admit that a miracle of healing had been performed.

52. Captains. See on v. 4.

53. Your hour. That is, the "hour" in which they were permitted to do what they would with Jesus. To evil men and angels it seemed that now, at long last, Jesus was in their clutches.

Darkness. It was night, a time appropriate to their sinister designs, a fit season for them to carry forward their work. But the spiritual darkness that shrouded their hearts was greater than the darkness of the night. Unrestrained, these evil men carried out the will of demons and gave unbridled rein to the hatred that was in their hearts.

54. Then took they him. [*Night Trial Before the Sanhedrin*, Luke 22:54–65=Matt. 26:57–75=Mark 14:53–72=John 18:25–27. Major comment: Matthew.] It should be noted that Luke gives the trial and Peter's denial in strict chronological order (cf. p. 192).

55. Hall. Gr. *aulē*, "courtyard" (see on Matt. 26:58).

56. By the fire. Literally, "toward the light," that is, the light of the fire (see DA 710).

59. Confidently affirmed. That is, he kept affirming or insisting strongly.

61. The Lord turned. Only Luke records this pathetic incident.

65. Many other things. The incidents mentioned are only illustrative of many more things Jesus suffered at the hands of the authorities and the mob (see on John 21:25).

66. As soon as it was day. [*Day Trial Before the Sanhedrin*, Luke 22:66–71=Matt. 27:1=Mark 15:1. Major comment: Luke. See Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus; Passion Week] The night trial before selected members of the Sanhedrin (see on Matt. 26:57–75), held in the home of the high priest, was not an official session, in spite of the fact that testimony was heard and a decision rendered. It was necessary to issue a formal call for a meeting of the Sanhedrin as soon as the sun rose, about 5:30 A.M. at that time of year in the latitude of Jerusalem. Hence, the essential features of the night trial had to be repeated. The day trial, therefore, resembles, in its main features, the night trial. That the night session was a meeting of the Sanhedrin is indicated in the statement that "as soon as it was day, the Sanhedrin again assembled" (DA 714).

Chief priests. See on Matt. 2:4; 26:3.

Scribes. See p. 55.

Led him. That is, from the guardroom at the palace of the high priest to the council chamber of the Sanhedrin.

Council. Gr. *sunedrion*, literally, “a sitting together”; hence, “an assembly.” In a special sense “the” *sunedrion* was the Sanhedrin. The term is undoubtedly used here in a technical sense to refer to the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (see p. 67).

67. Art thou the Christ? The night session had already considered the reply Christ gave to this question as an adequate reason for condemning Him to death (see on Matt. 26:63–66). The question was repeated for all to hear. Many members of the Sanhedrin were now present who had not been present at the night session (see DA 714), though Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea had not been summoned (DA 539, 699).

If I tell you. Jesus had already told them once, an hour or more earlier (see on Matt. 26:64).

68. If I also ask you. That is, to discuss the question in a reasonable way, to ascertain the facts. They were not interested in the facts in the case and would refuse to examine the evidence. Jesus had discussed the evidences of His Messiahship, probably in this very hall, two years before (see on John 5:17–47, esp. vs. 31–39).

Nor let me go. They were determined not to release Jesus, however convincing the evidence in His favor might be (see on Matt. 26:59).

69. Hereafter. That is, at His second coming (see Rev. 1:7).

Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10; see Additional Note on John 1.

Right hand. For comment see on Matt. 26:64.

70. Ye say that I am. Jesus acknowledges the truth of their statement. This is simply an idiomatic way of saying “Yes” (see Mark 14:62; Matt. 26:64). The “Son of man” is “the Christ” (Luke 22:67). See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

71. What need we? See on Matt. 26:65, 66. This was Jesus’ third condemnation at the hands of the Jewish leaders, and the third scene of abuse and mockery followed hard upon it (DA 714). Except for the restraining presence of the Roman soldiers, Jesus would doubtless have been murdered by the mob in the very presence of the Sanhedrin.

Had Jesus not been what He claimed to be, the Jewish leaders would have been absolutely right. But because He was all He claimed to be, they were eternally and irretrievably wrong.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–5DA 645

7–18DA 642–651

14–23DA 652–661

15–18DA 643

19 DA 653

24 DA 643; GC 348

26, 27 Ed 268

27 Ed 103

30 GC 427

31 4T 246

31, 32 DA 713, 812; EW 166; MB 119; ML 94; PK 175; 4T 529

31–34Ed 89

32 AA 63, 515; COL 156; CT 255; Ev 345; EW 170; 1T 379, 469; 2T 317; 3T 560; 5T 570

35 DA 273; GW 114; MH 480

39–53DA 685–697

40 DA 690
 41 GW 178; PK 48
 42 CH 375; EW 167; MH 230
 43 DA 693, 694; 2T 206; 4T 542
 43, 44 EW 167; 1T 240
 44 DA 689, 694, 734, 759; EW 49; 1T 158; 2T 203, 204; 4T 82, 534
 48 DA 696; GC 263
 50–51 DA 696
 53 DA 697
 54–71 DA 698–715
 57 DA 711
 58–62 3T 416
 61 EW 169, 194
 61, 62 COL 154; Ed 89
 62 4T 488
 64 EW 170
 67–71 DA 714

CHAPTER 23

1 *Jesus is accused before Pilate, and sent to Herod. 8 Herod mocketh him. 12 Herod and Pilate are made friends. 13 Barabbas is desired of the people, and is loosed by Pilate, and Jesus is given to be crucified. 27 He telleth the women, that lament him, the destruction of Jerusalem: 34 prayeth for his enemies. 39 Two evildoers are crucified with him. 46 His death. 50 His burial.*

1. Led him unto Pilate. [*First Trial Before Pilate, Luke 23:1–5=Matt. 27:2, 11–14=Mark 15:2–5=John 18:28–38. Major comment: Luke and John. See Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus; Passion Week, and Palestine Under the Herodians.*]

2. Perverting the nation. Luke lists three of the charges preferred against Jesus by the Jewish authorities. Here, they charge Him with being a revolutionary agitator. Throughout His ministry Jesus had taken great care to avoid providing any valid basis for such a charge as the one now brought against Him (see on Matt. 14:22; 16:20; Mark 1:45; 6:42; John 6:15). This fabricated charge was directly related to the false Messianic concepts entertained by the Jewish leaders (see on Luke 4:19).

Forbidding to give tribute. Three days before this the Pharisees had done their best to lure Jesus into making the statement they here claim that He did make, but their attempt met with inglorious defeat (see on Matt. 22:15–22).

Christ a King. Jesus had never made such a claim directly. They were no doubt thinking of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem but five days before this, an event that all members of the Jewish nation took as equivalent to a declaration by Jesus that He was assuming the throne of David (see on Matt. 21:5, 9).

5. Fierce. Or, “urgent.” They persistently insisted that Pilate accede to their demands.

Stirreth up the people. This charge was, of course, all too true, though not in the sense that the leaders would have Pilate believe. During recent weeks, particularly since the resurrection of Lazarus, popular opinion was increasingly favorable to Jesus. Previously, the priests and rulers themselves had ruefully admitted to one another that “the world is gone after him” (John 12:19).

Jewry. Literally, Judea; here probably used inclusively of all Israelite Palestine (see on chs. 1:5; 7:17). To be sure, Luke also uses the term in reference to Judea proper (see Luke 2:4; Acts 1:8; 8:1). However, Luke seems to be the only NT writer to use the term in the broader sense.

Beginning from Galilee. That is, where Jesus' greatest success had been. Peter uses almost the same phrase in Acts 10:37, to describe the spread of the gospel.

To this place. Jesus' accusers might have had in mind the dramatic events of the past few days, which aroused fears in their hearts that Jesus was about to enter upon a prolonged and even more successful ministry in Judea than in Galilee.

6. A Galilæan. [*Hearing Before Herod Antipas, Luke 23:6–12.* See Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus; Passion Week, and Palestine Under the Herodians.] Only Luke records this incident in the trial of Jesus. The most successful and impressive part of Christ's ministry had been in Galilee. Though born in Bethlehem, Jesus had been brought up in Galilee, and had spent practically all of His life there.

7. Herod's jurisdiction. That is, Galilee and Peraea (see pp. 46, 64; see on Luke 3:1).

Sent him to Herod. Pilate was faced with a dilemma. He was fully convinced of Jesus' innocence and had publicly announced his decision to this effect. His own determination to release Jesus was exceeded only by the determination of the Jewish authorities to have the Saviour crucified. During Pilate's past tenure of about five years as procurator of Judea (which then included Samaria), he had made himself most unpopular with the Jews, and he feared that to displease them further would endanger his office. He knew well the treachery of some of the Jewish leaders. He knew also that their hatred of Jesus was due to malice alone. Pilate therefore must have felt that he was cutting the Gordian knot by sending Jesus to Herod, hoping thereby to maintain the good will of the Jewish authorities and at the same time evade responsibility for the death of one who was obviously innocent.

At Jerusalem. Though half Idumæan and half Samaritan (see p. 64; The Hasmonæans and the Herods), Herod Antipas professed close adherence to the Jewish faith (see p. 33), and had no doubt come to Jerusalem to attend the Passover. This does not mean that he was, in any sense, a devout Jew, but simply that he maintained the forms of religion as a matter of political expediency. While in Jerusalem, Herod probably stayed in the palace of the Hasmonæans, the location of which is uncertain (see Jerusalem in Time of Christ).

8. Desirous to see him. Herod had now been living in adultery for some time (see on Matt. 14:3; Mark 6:17). About a year had passed since his murder of John the Baptist (see on Mark 6:1, 29), and his conscience continued to trouble him over the matter. At first he had feared that Jesus might be John the Baptist raised from the dead (see on Mark 6:14, 16). For some time Herod had earnestly desired an opportunity to have an interview with Jesus (see on Luke 9:9).

Seen some miracle. Curiosity seems to have been another motive that prompted Herod in his desire to have an interview with Jesus. He had the decrepit and maimed brought into the palace and promised to release Jesus as a reward for healing them (DA 729). Should Jesus do so, this would, presumably, constitute evidence that He was a genuine prophet and consequently not guilty of the charges the Jews preferred against Him. Thus Herod's curiosity would be satisfied. At the same time he would have sufficient grounds for releasing Jesus over any possible protest of the Jewish leaders.

9. Questioned with him. As a demonstration of favor and an implied promise of liberty, Herod ordered Jesus unbound (see DA 729), and then proceeded to question Him at length before he permitted the Jews to present their charges against Him.

Answered him nothing. In addition to the reasons that had prompted Jesus to remain silent before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate (see on Matt. 26:63; 27:13), was the additional reason that Herod had heard and rejected the message of John the Baptist. He had rejected the light of truth God had permitted to shine upon his path, and for a soul thus hopelessly hardened in sin Jesus had no words. This silence was a severe rebuke to the haughty monarch, and, together with Jesus' refusal to perform a miracle at his request, angered Herod and turned him against Jesus.

10. Chief priests and scribes. See p. 55; see on Matt. 2:4.

Vehemently accused him. This implies that they did so in a loud and angry voice.

11. Set him at nought. Literally, "counted him as nothing," that is, they insulted Him. Like Pilate, Herod was satisfied that malice alone prompted the charges against Jesus, but the silence of Jesus irritated him, for it appeared that Jesus slighted his authority.

A gorgeous robe. Possibly this was one of Herod's cast-off garments. In appearance it must have seemed gaudy in comparison with the simple, unostentatious garments Jesus usually wore.

Sent him again. Unless the Roman soldiers had intervened, as they had at the close of the day trial before the Sanhedrin (see on ch. 22:71), Jesus would not doubt have been killed by the mob during the course of the wild demonstration pictured here. But, like Pilate, Herod chose to evade responsibility, and sent Jesus back to Pilate.

12. Made friends. They composed their differences. It is likely that there had been intermittent friction between Pilate and Herod for a number of years.

13. When he had called. [Second Trial Before Pilate, Luke 23:13–25=Matt. 27:15–31^a=Mark 15:6–19=John 18:39 to 19:16. Major comment: Matthew and John.]

15. I sent you to him. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading "he sent him back to us." This seems to agree better with the context.

16. Chastise him. This was the first flogging Pilate gave Jesus (see on Matt. 27:26 for the second). By this concession Pilate hoped to avert the death penalty, probably by arousing sympathy for Jesus among the mob. Flogging as then administered often did result in death (see on Matt. 10:17). Instead of placating the mob, however, this concession to their impassioned demand for Jesus' death served only to whet their thirst for His blood. If Pilate would go so far as to flog an innocent man, surely, if pressed a little further, he could be persuaded to assent to His death.

17. Of necessity. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between retaining and omitting v. 17. Some manuscripts have it following v. 19.

19. Sedition. Gr. *stasis*, literally, "a standing"; hence also, "an insurrection."

20. Willing. Rather, "desiring."

21. They cried. Literally, "they kept shouting," that is, at Pilate.

23. Requiring. Rather, "asking," or "demanding."

And of the chief priests. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of these words.

25. Delivered Jesus. Jesus died under a Roman sentence, which was carried out under Roman supervision (see v. 36).

26. Led him away. [*The Crucifixion, Luke 23:26–49=Matt. 27:31b–56=Mark 15:20–41=John 19:17–37.* Major comment: Matthew and John.]

27. A great company. Including the disciples (see DA 743).

28. Turning unto them. This would probably have been impossible if Jesus had been carrying His cross at the time.

Daughters. Jesus addressed the women as inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Weep not for me. However, Jesus did not disdain their sympathy or rebuke them for it.

29. Days are coming. Jesus here refers to the siege of A.D. 70 (see DA 743; see on Matt. 24:15–20).

Blessed are the barren. Ordinarily Jews considered barrenness a curse (see on ch. 1:7, 25).

30. Say to the mountains. Compare Hosea 10:8; Rev. 6:16.

31. Green. Gr. *hugros*, “damp,” “moist,” or “wet,” as applied to a tree, “full of sap.” By a “green” tree Jesus refers to Himself (DA 743). Jesus was innocent, and if the things now occurring could happen to an innocent man, what would be the fate of those who were guilty?

What shall be done? Again Jesus refers to the calamities that would accompany the fall of Jerusalem nearly 40 years later (see on v. 29).

The dry. A figurative description of the state of Jewish society that led to the rejection of the Jews as God’s chosen people and to their dissolution as a nation (see Vol. IV, pp. 25–38).

34. Father, forgive them. Jesus refers to both the Romans and the Jews who had been instrumental in condemning and crucifying Him (see DA 744). His prayer would not, in itself, however, remove their guilt (see DA 744). In a broader sense this prayer includes all sinners to the end of time, for all are guilty of the blood of Jesus (see DA 745).

This is the first of seven utterances of Jesus as He hung upon the cross, sometimes called the Seven Words. No gospel writer mentions more than three, nor less than one, of these utterances. Arranged in point of time the seven “utterances” are as follows:

1. “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (v. 34).
2. “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (v. 43).
3. “Woman, behold thy son! ... Behold thy mother!” (see on John 19:26).
4. “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34).
5. “I thirst” (John 19:28).
6. “It is finished” (see on John 19:30).
7. “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (see on Luke 23:46).

They know not. The Jewish leaders had made their deliberate decision against Christ, though the full light of the truth He had come to reveal had been available to them. Yet, in a measure, even they did not fully appreciate what they were doing. They did not see their act in its full setting in the great conflict between good and evil (see DA 744). The common people, as a whole, had little concept of what was taking place, and their taunts and jeers were made in ignorance. They blindly followed their leaders (see on Matt. 23:16). The Roman soldiers had even less understanding of what they were doing, though even now, light pierced the heart of the centurion (see on Matt. 27:54).

Though important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of Jesus’ prayer in this verse, the weight of evidence favors retaining it.

35. If he. Literally, “if this [one]”; here spoken with contempt (see on chs. 14:30; 15:2).

Christ. That is, the Messiah, or Anointed One (see on Matt. 1:1).

36. Soldiers. According to the Greek, the mocking of the soldiers was less persistent than that of the Jewish rulers.

38. Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of the statement about the languages in which the inscription was written (see on Matt. 27:37). However, the equivalent statement in John 19:20 is fully attested.

39. If thou be Christ. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “Art thou not the Christ?”

40. Thou fear God. That is, before whose judgment seat you must appear.

Same condemnation. That is, the same sentence; meaning, in other words, “You are equally guilty. Who are you to condemn?”

41. We indeed justly. This thief was honest to the point of making a candid admission of his guilt. For the significance of the attitude here reflected in relation to the extending of divine mercy see on Matt. 5:3.

Nothing amiss. Literally, “nothing out of place.” This thief, and probably his companion also, had heard Jesus speak, had been with Him in Pilate’s judgment hall, and together they had gone to the place of execution (see DA 749). Having seen and heard much of what had taken place during the past few hours, the speaker was fully convinced that Jesus was all that He claimed to be. Thus it was also with the centurion supervising the execution (see on Matt. 27:54).

42. When thou comest. Literally, “whenever thou comest,” or “whenever thou mayest come.” The thief, repentant, accepted Jesus as Messiah and Saviour, the one who was to reign upon the throne of David and restore all things (see on Matt. 1:1; 21:9; Luke 19:10).

Into thy kingdom. Literally, “in thy kingdom.” The concept of the repentant thief concerning Christ’s kingdom was probably that held by all his fellow countrymen (see on ch. 4:19). There is no indication that he entertained a more enlightened concept of the “kingdom” than the disciples did (see on Matt. 18:1; 20:21). We should not make the mistake of supposing that the thief fully understood the teachings of Jesus on this point. His words do imply, however, a clear belief in the resurrection of the just (see Acts 24:15). Perhaps his idea of the resurrection was not so different from that of Martha (see on John 11:24). Even the Pharisees clearly believed in the resurrection (Acts 23:8).

However imperfect the thief’s understanding of the nature of Christ’s kingdom and of the resurrection might have been, Christ’s reply must be understood in terms of His own teachings with respect thereto. For a synopsis of His teachings on this subject see on Matt. 4:17; 25:31. Jesus made it clear that His “Kingdom” was “not of this world” (John 18:36), and that His “kingdom” of glory would not be established until He should return to earth in person (see on Matt. 24:3).

43. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18.

To day. Gr. *sēmeron*. As originally written, the Greek was without punctuation, and the adverb *sēmeron*, “today,” stands between two clauses which read, literally, “truly to you I say” and “with me you will be in the paradise.” Greek usage permitted an adverb to appear anywhere in a sentence the speaker or writer desired to place it. Merely from the

Greek construction of the sentence in question it is impossible to determine whether the adverb “today” modifies “I say” or “you will be.” Either is possible. The question is, Did Jesus mean to say, literally, “Truly to you I say today,” or “Today with me you will be in paradise”? The only way of knowing which Christ meant is to discover scriptural answers to some other questions: (1) What is paradise? (2) Did Jesus go to paradise on the day of His crucifixion? (3) What did Jesus teach about the time when men would enter upon their reward in paradise? For an answer to the first question see below on the word “paradise.” For answers to the second and third questions see below on the words “be with me.”

Be with me. On the eve of the betrayal—less than 24 hours before making this promise to the thief—Jesus had told the Twelve, “In my Father’s house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (see on John 14:1–3). Yet, three days later Jesus informed Mary, “I am not yet ascended to my Father” (John 20:17). Obviously, therefore, Jesus did not go to paradise, and was not in paradise, on the day of His crucifixion. Accordingly, the thief could not have been with Jesus in paradise.

Paradise. Gr. *paradeisos*, a transliteration of the Persian *pairidaêza*, meaning an “enclosure,” “park,” or “preserve” containing trees, in which animals were often kept for the hunt. It was enclosed by walls and sometimes furnished with towers for the hunters. The equivalent Hebrew word, *pardes*, is translated “forest,” or “orchard” (see on Neh. 2:8; Eccl. 2:5). In the LXX the “garden” of Eden is spoken of as the “paradise” of Eden (see on Gen. 2:8). In fact, *paradeisos* is common in the LXX where the word “garden” (Heb. *gan*) appears in the English translation (see Gen. 3:1; Isa. 51:3; Joel 2:3; etc.).

In the NT *paradeisos* occurs only in Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7. In 2 Cor. 12:2–4 “paradise” is obviously synonymous with “heaven.” The fact that Paul refers to no earthly “paradise” is doubly clear from the fact he equates being “caught up” to “heaven” with being “caught up” to “paradise.” According to Rev. 2:7 the “tree of life” is said to be “in the midst of the paradise of God,” whereas in Rev. 21:1–3, 10; Rev. 22:1–5 the tree of life is associated with the new earth, the New Jerusalem, the river of life, and the throne of God. There can be no doubt whatever that NT usage of *paradeisos* consistently makes it synonymous with “heaven.”

Therefore, when Jesus assured the thief of a place with Him in “paradise,” He referred to the “many mansions” of His “Father’s house” and to the time when He would “receive” unto Himself His own (see on John 14:1–3). Throughout His ministry Jesus had specifically stated that He would “reward every man according to his works” when He returned in triumph “in the glory of his Father with his angels” (see on Matt. 16:27). Not until that time will He invite the saved of earth to “inherit the kingdom prepared for” them “from the foundation of the world” (see on Matt. 25:31, 34; cf. Rev. 22:21). Paul taught that those who fall asleep in Jesus will come forth from their graves at Christ’s second coming (see 1 Cor. 15:20–23) to receive immortality (vs. 51–55). The resurrected righteous and righteous living will “be caught up together . . . to meet the Lord in the air,” and *thus* “ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). The thief will, accordingly, be “with” Jesus in “paradise” following the resurrection of the just, at His second coming.

It should be noted that the comma between the words “thee” and “to day” was inserted by the translators. The original Greek text, which had neither punctuation nor word division (see p. 115) reads: *amēn soi legō sēmeron met emou esē en tō paradeisō*, literally, “truly to-you I-say today with-me you-will-be in the paradise.” The adverb *sēmeron*, “today,” stands between the two verbs *legō*, “I-say,” and *esē*, “you-will-be,” and might properly apply to either. Its position immediately following the verb *legō*, “I-say,” may imply a closer grammatical relationship to it than to the verb *esē*, “you will be.”

Obviously, in placing the comma before the word “to day,” the translators were guided by the unscriptural concept that the dead enter into their rewards at death. But, as set forth above, it is manifest that neither Jesus nor the writers of the NT believed or taught such a doctrine. To place the comma before the word “today” thus makes Christ contradict what He and the various NT writers have plainly stated elsewhere. Accordingly, the Scriptures themselves require that the comma be placed *after* the word “to day,” not before it. See on John 4:35, 36.

Thus what Christ actually said to the thief on the cross was: “Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with me in paradise.” The great question the thief was pondering at the moment was not *when* he would reach paradise, but whether he would get there at all. Jesus’ simple statement assures him that, however undeserving he may be and however impossible it may appear for Jesus—dying the death of a condemned criminal—to make good such a promise, the thief will most assuredly be there. In fact, it was Jesus’ presence on the cross that made such a hope possible.

45. The sun was darkened. Some have carelessly suggested that Luke here refers to an eclipse; however, an eclipse of the sun is impossible when the moon is full, as at the Passover season. The darkness was supernatural. Important textual evidence (cf. p. 146) in support of the reading “eclipsed” instead of “darkened” is obviously an attempt by a later hand to account for the darkness.

46. Father. For comment on Jesus’ use of this term see on Matt. 6:8. For God as “Father” in Jewish literature see on John 5:18.

Into thy hands. Jesus died with the words of Ps. 31:5 upon His lips. The attitude thus expressed brings to a sublime climax the spirit of humble submission to the will of the Father exemplified throughout Jesus’ life on earth. In the Garden of Gethsemane it was the same selfless spirit that had prompted Jesus’ words, “not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39). For comment on Christ’s perfect submissiveness to the Father see on Luke 2:49. Happy the man or woman who lives and dies in the “hands” of God! Our all is safe—in His hands.

Spirit. Gr. *pneuma* (see on ch. 8:55).

He gave up the ghost. Literally, “He expired,” that is, “he breathed out.”

48. That sight. Or, “that spectacle.”

49. His acquaintance. Rather, “his acquaintances.”

50. A man named Joseph. [*The Burial*, Luke 23:50–56=Matt. 27:57–61=Mark 15:42–47=John 19:38–42. Major comment: Matthew and Mark.]

51. Not consented. Joseph and Nicodemus had not been summoned to the session of the Sanhedrin at which Jesus was tried and found guilty of blasphemy (DA 539, 699). The omission was deliberate. The vote to condemn Jesus was unanimous (see on Mark

14:64). Had these two righteous men been present, they certainly would have raised their voices in protest, as they had on former occasions (see DA 460, 539, 699, 773; see on John 7:50, 51).

A city of the Jews. An explanatory note probably added by Luke for the benefit of his non-Jewish readers (see p. 664).

53. Never. In the Greek there is a triple negative, which emphasizes the fact that the tomb had never been used (see on Matt. 27:60).

54. The preparation. That is, Friday (see on Mark 15:42, 46).

56. Rested the sabbath day. Luke specifically mentions Friday, the “preparation” day (v. 54), the Sabbath day (vs. 54, 56), and the “first day of the week” (ch. 24:1). There can be no question as to the sequence of these days or their identity. Christ was crucified on Friday, rested in the tomb over the Sabbath, having completed the work of redemption (see on Gen. 2:2, 3; Eze. 20:20), and rose the following day, the first day of the week (see on Luke 24:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–25DA 723–740

2, 3 DA 726

5–8DA 728

7, 8 EW 173

8, 9 DA 729

9–11EW 174

11 DA 731; EW 174

12 DA 728; EW 173

14–16DA 731

18 COL 294; DA 733

21 AA 85, 150; CT 425; DA 394, 734, 736, 743, 776; EW 109; GC 501, 643; SR 221, 298; 5T 502

22 DA 733

26–46DA 741–757

27–53SR 220–229

28 DA 743, 752

30, 31 DA 743

31 AA 25; DA 794

33 DA 741

34 COL 218; DA 744, 752, 760; EW 176; PP 140, 240; SR 222; 2T 208

35 DA 746

37, 39 SR 222

39–43DA 750

40–43SR 223

42, 43 COL 264

43 DA 751, 752

46 DA 756, 771; SR 226; 2T 211

56 DA 769, 774

CHAPTER 24

1 *Christ's resurrection is declared by two angels to the women that come to the sepulchre.*

9 *These report it to others. 13 Christ himself appeareth to the two disciples that went to*

Emmaus: 36 afterwards he appeareth to the apostles, and reproveth their unbelief: 47 giveth them a charge: 49 promiseth the Holy Ghost: 51 and so ascendeth into heaven.

1. Now. [*The Resurrection, Luke 24:1–12=Matt. 28:1–15=Mark 16:1–11=John 20:1–18.* Major comment: Matthew and John.] Gr. *de*, “but,” or “and,” connecting the first phrase of ch. 24 very closely with the concluding statement of ch. 23. The connection is more clearly seen with an alternate translation: “Indeed, they rested the Sabbath according to the commandment, but on the first day of the week ...” This translation makes quite evident the sacredness these early Christian believers attached to the seventh-day Sabbath. Their last act on Friday was to prepare “spices and ointments” (ch. 23:56). Then they laid everything aside “according to the [Sabbath] commandment” (see on Ex. 20:8–11), and did not resume their labor of love until early Sunday morning. The strong contrast between the sacredness of the Sabbath and the secular character of Sunday here embedded in the gospel narrative speaks eloquently to Christians today. For comment on the circumstances of the resurrection see Additional Note on Matt. 28; see on Matt. 28:1.

4. Two men. That is, angels (see on Matt. 28:2), as is clear from Luke 24:23. For other instances of angels appearing in human form see Acts 1:10; 10:30.

5. Bowed down. Evidently in fear and reverence, recognizing that the “men” were, in reality, celestial beings.

7. Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

10. Joanna. Mentioned only by Luke (see on ch. 8:3).

11. As idle tales. Literally, “like nonsense.” “Their words” did not make sense to the sorrowing disciples.

12. Then arose Peter. Some textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of v. 12. However, the similar account in John (see John 20:3–6) is fully attested.

13. Two of them. [*The Walk to Emmaus, Luke 24:13–32=Mark 16:12.* Major comment: Luke. See *The Resurrection and Subsequent Events; Passion Week*]. Later on in the narrative one of the two is identified as Cleopas (see v. 18). Evidently they had been in Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover, and might have lingered in the city most of the first day of the week because of the events surrounding the crucifixion, and possibly also because of the rumor that Jesus had risen.

That same day. It was now late in the afternoon of the resurrection day (see on Matt. 28:1).

Emmaus. Emmaus is probably to be identified with the village of *el-Qubeibeh*, about 7 mi. (11 km.) northwest of Jerusalem on the road to Lydda. Another site sometimes identified as Emmaus is the village of *Qalôniyeh*, about 3 mi. (4.8 km.) south of *el-Qubeibeh*.

Threescore furlongs. A “furlong” (Gr. *stadion*) was equal to 606.5 English ft. thus 60 “furlongs” would be a little less than 7 mi. (11.2 km.). The distance by road would be about 8 mi. (12.8 km.) (see DA 795).

14. Talked. Gr. *homileō*, “to associated with”; hence, “to converse with.” These two followers of Jesus seem to have been well informed about events in Jerusalem. They had

no doubt spent much of the day with other believers, listening to various persons who had brought reports of happenings clustering around the resurrection (see on Matt. 28:1).

15. *Jesus himself drew near.* The two disciples had not gone far toward Emmaus (see DA 795) when Jesus overtook them. He was thus with them for most of the journey, which probably occupied about two hours. They doubtless took Jesus to be another pilgrim who, like themselves, had been in Jerusalem for the Passover.

16. *Eyes were holden.* They were weary and so absorbed with their own gloomy thoughts that they did not observe Jesus closely as He joined them. Similar circumstances had apparently prevented Mary from recognizing Jesus at first, earlier the same day. In some of the postresurrection appearances Jesus was instantly recognized, or so it seems, while in others He was not. The words of Luke, here and in v. 31, imply in this case a supernatural dimming of the senses of the two disciples in addition to their self-preoccupation.

Should not know. Jesus might have revealed Himself immediately, but had He done so they might have been so elated as not to appreciate fully or to remember well the important truths He was about to impart to them. It was essential for them to understand the Messianic prophecies of the OT, together with the historical incidents and sacred rites that pointed forward to Christ. These alone could provide a firm foundation for their faith. A supposed faith in Christ that is not firmly rooted in the teachings of the Scriptures cannot possibly remain steadfast when the storms of doubt blow (see on Matt. 7:24–27). It was the fulfillment of the OT in the events recorded later in the NT to which Jesus now drew their attention (see DA 799).

17. *What manner?* An appropriate question with which to begin the conversation. The earnestness of the two disciples in discussing the events of the resurrection possibly made their conversation conspicuous to passers-by.

Have one to another. They were exchanging their thoughts; the conversation was not one-sided.

Are. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) ending Christ's question with the words "as ye walk," and reading the last part of the verse: "And they stood, [being, or, looking] sad." According to this reading, the two disciples were so surprised at Jesus' apparent ignorance of events in Jerusalem that they halted, probably casting incredulous glances at their companion (see on v. 18).

Sad. They were sad because they did not understand. How often sorrow and disappointment result from misunderstanding either God or one's fellow men. A proper understanding of the OT Scriptures would have dispelled their gloomy thoughts—as it did when they understood (see vs. 25–27, 33, 44–46). They had also forgotten the instructions Christ had given them directly, prior to His death (see v. 44).

18. *Cleopas.* Gr. *Kleopas*, apparently a contraction of the name *Kleopatros* (for a similar contraction in the name Antipas see on ch. 3:1). Opinion differs as to whether this man is to be identified with Cleophas (Gr. *Klōpas*; see on John 19:25). Whereas *Klōpas* is usually considered to be Aramaic (and often, indeed, identified with Alphaeus), *Kleopas* is definitely Greek. However, it seems to have been common for Jews to adopt the genuine Greek name most closely resembling their own Aramaic name; for example, Simon, in place of Simeon. However, identity of name does not prove that the two persons involved in this instance are necessarily identical.

Only a stranger. The two disciples thought it incredible that anyone from Jerusalem—the direction whence Jesus apparently came—could be, seemingly, so uninformed.

19. A prophet. The two disciples proceed to confess their faith in Jesus. While formerly they had believed Him to be the Messiah (see on v. 21), they still believed that He had been a mighty “prophet.”

20. Our rulers. The two disciples know the facts and place the blame where it belongs. They do not blame the common people, who accepted Jesus as a prophet, nor do they hold the Roman authorities accountable. The death of Jesus was the work of the leaders of the Jewish nation (see Matt. 27:2).

Delivered him. See on Matt. 27:1, 2.

21. We trusted. Literally, “we were hoping.” The two disciples now express their own convictions. They had accepted Jesus as a prophet, and later came to believe in Him as more than a prophet. It had been a settled conviction with them, but their faith had been greatly shaken because they did not understand the Scriptures concerning the Messiah. They now imply that they must have been mistaken in their former belief. The seriousness of their subsequent discussion, however, reveals that they had not entirely abandoned hope—especially in view of the astonishing reports of the women disciples who claimed to have seen Jesus (see vs. 22–24).

He. The pronoun is emphatic. They had thought Jesus was to be the promised Saviour of Israel.

Redeemed Israel. Their concept of what was involved in the work of redeeming Israel was no doubt limited primarily to political salvation from the iron grip of Rome. For a discussion of the false Messianic hopes of the Jews see on ch. 4:19.

The third day. See pp. 248–250.

22. Certain women. See on Matt. 28:1.

Of our company. Literally, “of ours.” By this, the two disciples probably refer to all who had shared the “hope” that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah of prophecy.

23. A vision. Gr. *optasia*, “a sight,” or “a vision,” that is, anything seen. *Optasia* may be either natural or supernatural. There is no evidence as to which is meant here by the speaker.

He was alive. So far as the two disciples were concerned, it was all hearsay evidence, and they were not as yet convinced. The reports had disturbed, but not convinced, them.

24. Certain of them. Probably a reference to the hasty visit of Peter and John to the tomb (see John 20:2–10; see Additional Note on Matt. 28).

25. Fools. Literally, “not understanding [ones],” that is, “foolish [ones].” They might have known the truth if their preconceived opinions had not blinded them to the teachings of the Scriptures.

To believe all. All Scripture is inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), and only by accepting it as such can we profit from it. Christians who discard, neglect, or give fanciful interpretations to much of what the OT prophets have written are, in the words of Christ, lacking in good sense.

26. Ought not? Rather, “was it not necessary?” The prophets had foretold the sufferings of Messiah (see on v. 27). Jesus Himself had repeatedly foretold His sufferings and death (see on ch. 18:31). In addition, He had given as His reason for telling them, that the fulfillment of His predictions would be a basis for faith—that, when the event

came to pass, they might believe (see on John 13:19; 14:29). Instead of bringing disappointment, the death of Jesus should have proved a great confirmation of faith. Strangely enough, whereas the crucifixion destroyed the hopes of the disciples in Jesus as the Messiah, it provided Joseph and Nicodemus with convincing proof of that great truth (see DA 772, 775, 776).

27. Beginning at Moses. The OT contains many passages to which Christ might have made reference (see on Gen. 3:15; Ex. 12:5; Num. 21:9; 24:17; Deut. 18:15; Ps. 22:1, 8, 16, 18; Isa. 7:14; 9:6, 7; 50:6; 53; Jer. 23:5; Micah 5:2; Zech. 9:9; 12:10; 13:7; Mal. 3:1; 4:2; etc.).

Expounded. That is, explained or interpreted.

All the scriptures. It was a vital point in the teachings of Jesus that “all the scriptures” of the OT look forward to His Messianic work. For a summary of the way in which the OT writers were guided in the delineation of the life mission of the Messiah see on Matt. 1:22. Misguided men who deprecate the OT reveal little knowledge of the high esteem in which Christ held those sacred, inspired writings. Those who study and believe the OT, written by the hand of Moses and others, will find Christ therein (see on John 5:39, 46). Christ Himself warned that those who minimize the importance and value of the OT do not really believe in Him (see on John 5:47).

28. Made as though. Jesus began to take leave of them, and would have done so had they not pressed Him to remain. But for their insistence that He accept their hospitality, the two disciples would have forfeited the blessing that came to them. Their reason for urging Christ to remain with them was a profound desire for more of the precious instruction He had imparted to them for the past hour or two. Only those who hunger and thirst for a deeper understanding of the things of God can expect to be provided with a more ample supply of the heavenly manna (see on Matt. 5:6).

29. Constrained. Thus it had been with Abraham and his three celestial visitors (see Gen. 18:1–8; cf. Heb. 13:2). The art of Christian hospitality is urgently in need of revival today.

Abide with us. That is, share the hospitality of our own home (see DA 800). This may imply that the unnamed companion of Cleopas was a member of his family.

Far spent. Literally, “has declined”; here probably meaning that, according to Jewish reckoning, the first day of the week had closed—at sunset—and a new day had begun. The sun had already set (about 6:30 P.M. at the season of the year) before their arrival at Emmaus (see DA 800).

He went in. The King of the universe graciously accepted the hospitality of this humble household.

30. Sat at meat. Literally, “reclined,” that is, at the table (see on Mark 2:15).

Bread. The staple article of diet and the main dish of this evening meal.

Blessed it, and brake. On Jewish customs and the practice of Jesus in the blessing and the breaking of the bread see on Mark 6:41. Some have sought to make this a meal commemorating the Lord’s death, though without any scriptural basis. To do so distorts the simplicity of the narrative and contradicts the context.

31. Their eyes. See on v. 16.

They knew him. Rather, “they recognized him”; that is, by the way He blessed and broke the bread and by the nailprints in His hands (see v. 35; DA 800).

32. Did not our heart burn? A figure of speech (see Ps. 39:3; Jer. 20:9). The form of the question in Greek demands an affirmative answer (see on Luke 6:39). Spiritual illumination had been penetrating the darkness of their souls while they listened with rapt attention to Jesus unfolding the Scriptures. Now they realized what had happened to them. The gloom was gone. The presence of Christ had illuminated their humble home, and glorious truths He had unfolded to them dispelled the shadows of doubt and uncertainty that had fallen across their minds. They probably thought to themselves that this stranger had spoken as Jesus would have, had He been still alive and with them.

The heart experience of these two disciples will be the experience of those who listen intently to the voice of Heaven speaking to their hearts through the Sacred Word. Those who find the OT Scriptures blurred and dull to their out-of-focus thinking, should come in humility to Jesus and learn of Him (see on v. 27).

While he talked. Probably for about two hours (see on v. 14).

33. The same hour. [*First Appearance in the Upper Room, Luke 24:33–49=Mark 16:13=John 20:19–23.* Major comment: Luke and John. See See The Resurrection and Subsequent Events; Passion Week]. Without tasting the food before them (see DA 801) they left immediately, hurrying back to Jerusalem to share their great discovery with the other disciples.

Returned to Jerusalem. The sun had set before their arrival at Emmaus, and it was therefore after 6:30 P.M. (see on v. 29). Evening twilight was over by about 8:00. The two disciples probably set out for Jerusalem when it was nearly dark. Thus most of their journey was during the full darkness of night. Weary though they had been on the way home to Emmaus their weariness and hunger were now gone. As they entered Jerusalem by the east gate the dark and silent city was dimly lighted by the rising moon (see DA 802).

The eleven. This term must have been used in a somewhat technical sense here to designate Christ's immediate disciples much as the term "the Twelve" had been used before Judas' defection (see chs. 8:1; 9:12; etc.). Actually there were but ten of the apostles present, as Thomas was not with them upon this occasion (see John 20:24).

Gathered together. In the upper room, where they had celebrated the Passover together (see on Matt. 26:18; cf. DA 802).

Them that were with them. Others of the "company" of believers (see on v. 22), probably including the women, at least those who had been to the tomb earlier that day, and perhaps other believers as well.

34. Saying. That is, several of the people already in the room greeted the two disciples with this piece of news.

Simon. Of the Eleven he was most in need of comfort and assurance of fellowship with his risen Lord (see on Mark 16:7). The Eleven had no doubt thought it strange that Jesus should have appeared to the women of their company and not to them. Surely, they no doubt thought, if He is truly alive, He would make Himself known to us, His closest companions.

In view of the fact that Jesus joined the two disciples on the way to Emmaus soon after their departure from Jerusalem (see DA 795), and that even after His disappearance He remained with them all the way back to Jerusalem (see DA 801), Jesus must have appeared to Peter prior to joining the two travelers en route to Emmaus. However, these two disciples seem to have been in close contact with their fellow believers during much

of the day at least (see on v. 14), and if the appearance to Peter had taken place long before their departure, they probably would have already known of the fact.

35. They told. Gr. *exēgeomai*, “to lead out,” or “to recount.” When the two disciples finished relating their account, this additional evidence did not clear up all doubt and unbelief in the minds of the company as a whole (see Mark 16:13; DA 802). In fact, not until Jesus actually partook of some food was all their unbelief swept away (see Luke 24:41–43).

36. Jesus himself. Jesus had entered the room unseen at the same time the two disciples from Emmaus had been admitted (see DA 802), but was invisible to those in the room (see on v. 16). For John’s eyewitness account of Jesus’ appearance upon this occasion see John 20:19–23.

37. Terrified and affrighted. The disciples had secluded themselves in the upper room for fear of the Jews (see on John 20:19), and were apparently already at a high pitch of emotional tension. They had been intimate companions of One who had been executed for sedition. Might they not soon suffer the same fate? They probably feared arrest at any moment. In addition to all this, the reports of a risen Christ must have made them tense with excitement. However, in spite of these reports they were apparently unprepared for a personal encounter with the risen Christ.

A spirit. Gr. *pneuma*, here probably signifying “an apparition” Gr. *phantasma*, as, indeed, at least one ancient manuscript [D] reads). For comments on the Greek word *phantasma* see on Matt. 14:26.

39. My hands. Here was undeniable evidence that the One who now appeared to them alive was none other than their crucified Lord. Jesus was patient with them in their slowness to comprehend (see on v. 35), and provided them with tangible evidence on which to base their faith. It was this confidence in the reality of the resurrection that imparted convincing power to the message the apostles bore (see 1 John 1:1, 2; 5:20; cf. Luke 24:48).

My feet. It is here implied that Jesus’ feet, as well as His hands, were pierced with nails.

Handle me. Jesus offered sensory evidence of three kinds in order to convince the disciples that He was a real, material being even after His resurrection. Sight, hearing, and the sense of touch were combined to provide assurance that He was a real being and not an apparition or a figment of an overwrought imagination. In the resurrected, glorified body of Jesus we have an example of what we will be like in the resurrection (see 1 Cor. 15:22, 23; cf. 1 John 3:1, 2).

A spirit. Gr. *pneuma* (see on ch. 8:55). When Jesus came to this earth He did not divest Himself of His divine nature (see on John 1:14), and when He returned to the Father He bore with Him the likeness of humanity (see DA 832). He “ascended to heaven, bearing a sanctified, holy humanity. He took this humanity with Him into the heavenly courts, and through the eternal ages He will bear it, as the One who has redeemed every human being in the city of God” (EGW RH March 9, 1905).

40. When he had thus spoken. Some textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of v. 40. There is no question, however, of the genuineness of the basic statement here made, for its occurrence in John 20:20 is undisputed.

His hands. The nail-pierced hands were mute but eloquent testimony to the truth of the resurrection.

41. Believed not for joy. The reality of Christ's presence seems to have been too good to be true (see Mark 16:12, 13; see on Luke 24:35).

Any meat? Literally, "any food," that is, anything to eat. Jesus offers them a fourth evidence that He is still a real, corporeal being (see on v. 39).

42. Broiled fish. A common article of diet in ancient Palestine (see on John 21:9). Several of the disciples had been fishermen prior to their call to discipleship (see on Luke 5:1–11).

And of an honeycomb. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words.

43. Did eat. Undoubtedly to convince the disciples that He was still a material, corporeal being. Some textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for adding, "and the things left over he gave to them."

44. The words which I spake. See ch. 18:31–33.

All things must be fulfilled. See on Matt. 1:22; Luke 24:26, 27.

The law of Moses. That is, the portion of the OT written by Moses, commonly called the Pentateuch, and consisting of the first five books of the Bible. Elsewhere the Pentateuch is referred to as "the law" (Matt. 7:12; Luke 16:16; etc.), "the law of Moses" (Acts 28:23), and sometimes simply "Moses" (Luke 16:29, 31).

This is the only place in the Scriptures where specific mention is made of the common threefold division of the OT recognized by the Hebrew people themselves. For a discussion of the formation of the OT canon see Vol. I, pp. 36-45.

The prophets. The Hebrews divided this section of the OT into what they called "the former prophets"—Joshua, Judges, and the books of Samuel and Kings—and "the latter prophets," or Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor prophets (see Vol. I, p. 37).

The psalms. Including not only what we call the book of Psalms, but probably also all the other books not belonging to "Moses" or to "the prophets." These books of the third section are commonly called the Hagiographa, or simply the Writings (see Vol. I, p. 37).

Concerning me. See on Matt. 1:22; Luke 24:26, 27; John 5:39.

45. Then opened he. How often in the past Jesus had sought to do so, but without success (see on ch. 18:34!)

46. It is written. The common NT expression used to refer to the contents of the sacred canonical Scriptures of the OT (see on Matt. 4:4).

Thus it behoved. See on v. 26.

The third day. See pp. 248-250.

47. Repentance. Gr. *metanoia*, "a change of mind" (see on Matt. 3:2, 8).

Remission. Or, "forgiveness."

In his name. See on Matt. 10:18.

Among all nations. See on Matt. 28:19, 20.

Beginning at Jerusalem. Jesus had begun His work in Jerusalem and in Judea (see on Matt. 4:17), and the disciples were to do the same. Here many of the greatest evidences of His divinity had been given. Jesus had worked first in Judea in order to provide the leaders of the nation with an opportunity to observe His teachings and His ministry, to accept Him as the Messiah, and to unite their efforts with His in the proclamation of the

gospel of the kingdom (see DA 231). As later events were to prove, many of the priests, and probably others of the leaders of the nation, became “obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7). The early successes of the gospel in Jerusalem were amazing and encouraging (see Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4, 33; 5:14, 16, 28, 42; 6:1, 7).

48. *Ye are witnesses.* Christ’s disciples had been with Him for a number of years, they knew what He taught and how He labored, and now they were eyewitnesses of the truth of the resurrection (see on v. 39). They could tell others what they had seen and heard (see 2 Peter 1:16–18; 1 John 1:1, 2). They never hesitated to affirm that they were “witnesses” of Christ (see Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39, 41; etc.). They had a great story to tell and they never tired of telling it. It is our privilege today, as believers in a risen Saviour, to bear witness of the things we have seen and heard of the way of salvation in Christ Jesus (see 2 Tim. 2:2; cf. 2 Cor. 5:18–20).

49. *Promise of my Father.* That is, the Holy Spirit (see on Acts 1:4, 8). This promise Jesus had discussed at length with the disciples on the night of His betrayal (see on John 14:16–18, 26; 16:7–13).

Tarry ye. That is, after Jesus’ ascension (see on Acts 1:4). The disciples yet had appointments with Jesus in Galilee (see Matt. 28:10), but afterward they returned to Jerusalem, apparently in obedience to the command here given.

Endued. Literally, “clothed.”

Power. Gr. *dunamis*, “ability to perform.” This “power” would enable them to be effective “witnesses” (see on v. 48). Without “power from on high” the testimony borne by the disciples would not convince and convict men’s hearts. The coming of the Holy Spirit, ten days after the ascension, imparted the power of which Christ here speaks (see on Acts 1:8; 2:1–4), and immediately the apostles began to bear witness to Christ. The testimony of the disciples, fortified and made effective by the power of the Holy Spirit, resulted in the conversion of about 3,000 in one day (see Acts 2:41). Under the guiding and convicting power of the Holy Ghost the church experienced phenomenal growth (see on Luke 24:47). From Pentecost onward the believers were, literally, “clothed with power from on high.”

50. *He led them out.* [*The Ascension, Luke 24:50–53=Mark 16:19, 20=Acts 1:8–12.* Major comment: Luke. See See The Resurrection and Subsequent Events; Resurrection to Ascension]

Except for Mark’s brief account of the ascension, only Luke (here and in Acts 1:8–12) records this event, and gives the few details of the ascension to be found in the Scriptures. He alone mentions the time (see Acts 1:3) and the place (see Luke 24:50) of the event. For the chronology of the ascension see Additional Note on Matt. 28. Apparently the disciples had returned from Galilee to Jerusalem, where they were to begin their labors (see on Luke 24:49).

Bethany. Bethany was situated on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, over the summit of which Jesus now led the eleven (see Acts 1:12; DA 830; see on Matt. 21:1).

Lifted up his hands. The usual posture in pronouncing a benediction or blessing, and often the posture in which prayer was offered (see on ch. 18:13).

51. *He blessed them.* An appropriate conclusion to the years of association the disciples had enjoyed with Jesus.

Parted from them. Jesus had been standing close to the disciples, perhaps in the center as they stood in a circle about Him, and, as His hands stretched out in blessing upon them, He slowly ascended from their midst (see DA 830, 831).

Carried up into heaven. Jesus ascended to heaven “in the form of humanity” (DA 832; see on ch. 24:39). Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of this clause. Of the fact stated, however, there can be no doubt (see Acts 1:9–11; etc.).

52. They worshipped him. See on Matt. 28:17. Some textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of these words.

Returned to Jerusalem. Where they took up residence in the same upper room in which they had celebrated the Last Supper together (see Acts 1:13; DA 802). With joy and great faith they began the task committed to them by their Lord (see on Mark 16:20).

53. In the temple. The Temple was a place of assembly, particularly for the morning and evening hours of prayer (see on ch. 1:9), and here the apostles first found opportunity to bear witness to their faith (see Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:21, 42.)

Amen. See on Matt. 28:20.

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1–12DA 788–794

4–6EW 186

5–7DA 789

11 8T 68

13 CW 80

13, 14 DA 795

13–33DA 795–801

15 DA 796; ML 207

16 DA 800

17–21DA 796

21 AA 25; DA 794

25–27DA 796

27 AA 221; COL 39, 127; CW 80; DA 234, 796; GC 349; 4T 401

27–32FE 189

29, 30 DA 800

31–34DA 801

32 COL 40; CT 341; DA 668, 801; GC 350; PK 626; TM 88, 310; 6T 53

33 DA 801

33–48DA 802–808

34, 35 DA 802

36 DA 804; ML 51

36–43DA 803

45 FE 190

45–48AA 26; DA 804

47 8T 57

49 AA 30; COL 327; ML 37, 59; PP 381; TM 443; 2T 120; 5T 159; 8T 15

50 DA 830; EW 190

50–53DA 829–835

50, 51 AA 32

52, 53 GC 339
53 AA 35; GC 350
6

⁶Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Lk 21:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.